

IN TRANSLATIŌNE

Calvin's Response to a Certain Tricky Middler

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In the Fall of 1561, when the work translated here was first published, John Calvin had less than three years remaining in his life. He had completed his final revision of the *Institutes* in Latin in 1559, and his final French version of the *Institutes* in 1560. By 1559, he also had established a school in Geneva for children and older students. He was increasingly afflicted

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1. In 1560, Catherine de Medici issued the Edict of Saint-Germain, decreeing limited toleration for the French Huguenots, allowing them private worship. It was not actually registered in the laws of France until 1562, and was effectively nullified by The Massacre of Vassy in March 1562, when Francis, Duke of Guise, and his troops killed many in a congregation of Huguenots worshipping in a barn. J. Delaborde, *Les Protestants a la Cour de Saint-Germain, Lors de Colloque de Poissy* (Paris: Sandoz et Fischabcher, 1884) 2. See also Thomas Lindsay, *History of the Reformation in Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, Scotland and England* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons; Kessinger Publishing, 1906), 189.

2. T. H. L. Parker, *John Calvin: A Biography* (Oxford: Lion Hudson plc, 2006), 157–160.

3. *Les Protestants à la Cour de Saint-Germain*, 27.

4. This background is drawn largely from Richard Butler's *Interprètes de la Bible: études sur les Réformateurs du XVIe siècle* (Paris: Editions Beauchesne, 1980), which provides a detailed background of the events leading up to Calvin's "Response."

5. Balduin's name sometimes is spelled "Bauduin" or "Baudoin" in various histories.

6. "On the duty of the pious man who truly loves public peace, in the midst of the present religious disputes." G. Cassandro, *De officio pii ac publicae tranquillitatis vere amantis viri in hoc religionis dissidio*, edited by F. Balduin (Basel: 1561; repr. Lazari Zetzneri, 1612).

7. Paul Henry, *Life and Times of John Calvin*, trans. Henry Stebbing, 2 vols. (London: Whittaker and Co: 1849), 2.410. See also *Interprètes de la Bible*, 250.

8. *Life and Times*, 410.

9. Hugh Reyburn, *John Calvin, His Life, Letters, And Work* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1814), 299.

by illnesses. One could have expected him to have taken a break from his exhausting work. But his desire to further the progress of the Reformation in France drove him to continue his efforts.

Prospects for reformation in France looked fairly positive in 1559 after the death of King Henry II of France, who had routinely persecuted the Protestants. Henry's widow, Catherine de Medici, as mother of Henry's young son, Francis II, was in effect the primary ruler of France. She initially took a position of moderation toward the Protestants, actively speaking out against their persecution.¹ During this period, Calvin and his associates in Geneva trained and sent more than 100 ministers to France.²

But unrest continued to simmer in the Kingdom of France. In response to the growing political and religious upheaval, Catherine de Medici called the Colloquy of Poissy in September 1561.³ Among the many issues facing various leaders of France during this period of upheaval was the question of the dispute between Protestants and the Roman Catholics.⁴ Beza had been invited to speak, and a celebrated jurist named François Balduin⁵ also was invited. Balduin carried with him for presentation a book titled *De Officio Pii Ac Publicae Tranquillitatis Vere Amantis Viri in Hoc Religionis Dissidio*.⁶ This work was what prompted Calvin's response.

Earlier, Balduin had studied under Calvin. Calvin, suffering from infirmities and mourning the death of his wife, and no doubt recognizing intelligence in Balduin, valued his company and trusted him enough to make him his personal secretary. Calvin granted him free access to his papers and library.⁷ Sometime during this period, Balduin apparently told Calvin that he had to go back to France to tend to some personal affairs. After he had left, Calvin discovered that Balduin had taken some of his papers, including some letters from Bucer criticizing Calvin, which Balduin later used to attack his former master.⁸

Balduin later gained favor with Antoine de Bourbon, King of Navarre, who directed him to proceed to Germany to meet with George Cassander to discuss Cassander's plan for reunification of the churches.⁹ Balduin worked with Cassander on this project of unification in 1561.¹⁰

Cassander was known as an Erasmusian humanist and a part-time theologian.¹¹ In August 1561, shortly before the Colloquy began in September, Cassander finished his book.¹² On its

10. Mario Turchetti, "Middle Parties in France during the Wars of Religion," in *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War in France and the Netherlands 1555–1585*, Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen Verhandelingen, Afd. Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks, deel 176, ed. Philip Benedict, Guido Marnef, Henk van Nierop and Marc Venard (Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1999), 168.

11. *Interprètes de la Bible*, 250.

12. *Interprètes de la Bible*, 250.

title page, he stated that the work was published anonymously so as to not unduly influence the judgment of others, hoping that it would lead others to the sort of peace he envisioned for the church.¹³

Cassander had been invited to the Colloquy by Antoine, King of Navarre, but he became sick before the journey. He entrusted the book to Balduin to deliver at the Colloquy. Balduin fulfilled Cassander's wish, but according to those present at the Colloquy, he did nothing to dissuade the perception there that he was the book's author.¹⁴ As one commentator notes, "this permitted Calvin and his associates to not only attribute authorship of *De Officio* to him [Balduin] in good faith, but to consider him the vilest of the apostates."¹⁵

Calvin, alarmed that the views expressed in *De Officio* were being granted a hearing among the political and religious leaders in France, and no doubt driven by a personal sense of betrayal, immediately drafted a response. By October 7, 1561, he was able to send it to Beza.¹⁶ Calvin, as he often did with other works, and unlike most Romaniſt writers, published it in Latin¹⁷ and in French, gaining an advantage among the common people because they would be able to read his side of the argument but not that of his opponents.

The title of the French originally published in 1561 was "Response à un cauteleux et rusé moyenneur."¹⁸ "Cauteleux" can be translated "wiley"; "rusé" can be translated as "tricky." "Moyenneur" appears to be a word coined by Calvin meaning something like "middle-of-the-roader."¹⁹ In the Latin title, the description was slightly different: "Verisſpellem Meditorem." This can be translated as a "skin-changing mediator." Either version indicates the harsh tone of Calvin's work. It was later republished in French under the title used in this translation: "Response à Un Certain Moyenneur Rusé," retaining the "tricky" adjective, but subduing the tone slightly.²⁰

Calvin's "Response" follows very closely the points made by Cassander in *De Offici*. Although it is occasionally obvious that it was written in haste, the depth and breadth of Calvin's arguments remain clear. Cassander argued that any person who would withdraw from the Roman Catholic Church was guilty of schism. Cassander further argued that whatever errors may reside in the Roman Catholic Church or whatever superſtitious practices may yet exist there, one must not break from the established and ancient traditions found in the Roman Church, because the truth of the Goſpel ſtill resided there. Calvin relentlessly refuted these points, drawing from Scripture inſtead of tradition, and thereby ſuccinctly identifying the principal issues driving the Reformation.

Hiſtory has tended to judge Cassander as being well-meaning but naïve in his attempt to find peace. Not only was *De Offici* severely criticized by Calvin, it also received harsh criticism from Catholic scholars of the time.²¹ In the words of one scholar, Cassander's theology here was "extremely fragile."²²

He clearly did not understand the true nature of the differences between the Roman Church and the Reformation. Nevertheless, its publication "opened the door"²³ for Calvin to once again clearly and strongly emphasize the fundamental reasons for the Reformation.

Publication of the "Response" caused Balduin to further attack Calvin, alleging, among other things, that he lived in luxury. He also mocked him for not having any children.²⁴ Calvin answered these insults even more severely in his "Answer to the Insults of Fr. Balduin."²⁵ For all of Calvin's harshness, he rightly called Balduin a "skin-changer." According to a Catholic scholar of the time, Balduin had changed his faith and confession at least seven times.²⁶

Eventually, Calvin came to regret his harsh words, writing to Beza, "Weariness makes me repent of the labor I have undertaken, and in reading my book you will perceive that I have been exasperated by the indignities offered me."²⁷ Nevertheless, Calvin's miſtake in identifying the author of *De Officio*, which led him to write more emotionally than he might otherwise have done, has given us a glimpse of a side of Calvin not often seen. He clearly was a man of passion, driven by concern for Chriſt's Church and a forthright willingness to

13. *De Officio*, original title page: "Autoris nomen ideo non apponitur, ut lectori liberius & æquius iudicandi poteſtas permittatur," quoted in *Interprètes de la Bible*, 250, footnote 6.

14. *Interprètes de la Bible*, 251.

15. *Interprètes de la Bible*, 251: "il permit à Calvin et à ses amis, non ſeulement de lui attribuer en toute bonne foi le *De officio*, mais encore de le conſider comme le plus vil des renégats."

16. *Interprètes de la Bible*, 251

17. Latin version: "Reſponſio Ad Verisſpellem Quendam Mediatorem," in *Corpus Reformatorum*, ed. G. Baum, Ed Cunitz, Eduard Reuss, and Alfred Erichson, v. 37 (Brunsvigae: C.A. Schwetschke, 1834–1900), *Calvini Opera*, 9, 529–560.

18. Paris: Nicolas Edoard, 1561.

19. Calvin is credited by Turchetti with coining the term "Moyenneur." "Middle Parties in France during the Wars of Religion," p. 165.

20. The full title: "Response à Un Certain Moyenneur Rusé; qui ſous couleur de pacification a taſché de rompre le droit cours de l'Evangile au royaume de France," Jean Calvin, *Recueil Des Opuscules, Petis Traictez de M. Jean Calvin* (Geneva: Stoer, 2nd ed. 1611) 2175–2214.

21. *Interprètes de la Bible*, 265.

22. *Interprètes de la Bible*, 265: "le *De officio* dont l'irénisme eſt inſiniment reſpectable, eſt, du point de vue théologique, d'une extreme fragilité."

23. *Interprètes de la Bible*, 267.

24. John Calvin, *His Life, Letters, and Works*, 300.

25. John Calvin, "Response de Jean Calvin aux iniures de Fr. Balduin," 2214–2234.

26. *Life and Times of John Calvin*, 2.411.

27. From manuscript cited by Paul Emil Henry, *Das Leben Johann Calvins, des groſſen Reformators*: Volume 3, Issue 2 (Hamburg, Perthes: 1844), 559, n2: "Me certe ob taedium poenituit ſumpti laboris et legendo cognosces, me indignitate fuiſſe exacerbatum." Translation here from Thomas Dyer, *The Life of John Calvin* (London, John Murray: 1850), 512–513. Cf. Epiſtle 3662. Calvinus Bezae, CR 47 (CO 19), col. 196.

take on its enemies at any cost. Despite his infirmity, illness, fatigue, and the never ending demands placed upon him by his responsibilities to the City of Geneva and his associates throughout Europe, he shows himself to be at the peak of his powers in rhetoric and passion for the church.

The controversy he engaged in remains with us. There seems to be a constant temptation to abandon the Gospel as defined by Scripture in favor of harmony with those who disagree with it. Perhaps this translation of Calvin's "Response" may remind us of what is at stake—and why such temptations must ever be resisted.²⁸

RESPONSE TO A CERTAIN TRICKY MIDDLE,
Who under color of pacification has undertaken to
break the right course of the Gospel in the
Kingdom of France¹

Recently a vile book was published, full of venom, disguised and sweetened by a favorable title: "On the duties of a faithful man who truly loves public tranquility and peace, in the realm of the discord that one sees in religion."² The author says, in excusing himself, that he remains nameless out of fear of being seen as one with prejudice toward the cause. For my part, I am quite content that one would judge the matters in the book simply, provided that he takes away all the diverse masks the author brings to fool those who are not paying attention.

He boasts of having been strong in religion since his first young age, not at all given to superstitions, and stating that none would dare speak such of him, given that he is of such an excellent spirit. He says this with the goal of persuading simple men, and those who have not known him, that he is as an Angel descended from heaven with a good and agreeable voice as a revelation from on high. But to those of us who have personally known him from long ago, he has not shown any tokens of such great faith, piety, or prudence. The

28. After diligent searching by the translator, the editor, and others, it does not appear that this work has ever been translated into English.

1. The title in French is "Réponse à Un Certain Moyenneur Rusé: qui sous couleur de pacification a tasché de rompre le droit cours de l'Évangile au royaume de France," reprinted in Jean Calvin, *Recueil Des Opuscules, Petis Traictez de M. Jean Calvin* (Geneva: Stoer, 2nd ed. 1611) 2175–2214. Originally published in 1561 under the title *Réponse à un cauteleux et rusé moyenneur* (Paris: Nicolas Edoard, 1561). Latin version: "Responsio Ad Versipellem Quendam Mediatorem," in *Corpus Reformatorum*, ed. G. Baum, Ed Cunitz, Eduard Reuss, and Alfred Erichson, v. 37 (Brunsvigae: C.A. Schwetschke, 1834–1900), *Calvini Opera*, 9, 529–560.

2. G. Cassandro, *De officio pii ac publicae tranquillitatis vere amantis viri in hoc religionis dissidio*, edited by F. Bauduin (Basel: 1561; repr. Lazari Zetzneri, 1612).

readers should therefore guard themselves from too easily believing him.

He laments to himself that the grave and sober men, of whom he would like to be considered the first officer rather than the last, have granted him no point of entry to public councils, and that they have not given him the backing of authority he needs to pacify troubles. See here, as if we would not already know the purpose of his voyage to France: how he disguised himself under a false story that he had to give order to some of his particular affairs, and then he went right to them seeking favor, hoping to receive some good booty. Such are the machinations he has hatched. And then after putting forth his effort, see how he insinuates himself treacherously toward some of the great men of the courts. By such subtle means he seeks to make himself valuable.

He magnifies his affections. He says that he has human courage, is sober, full of amity and brotherliness. The book he put forth is full of pure deception: designed to defend and cover wicked errors stuffed with slanders and bitterness. I say that it would be quite difficult to find a similar example of pride and presumption or of like malice and petty servile shrewdness. One must, therefore, remove the deceptions by which he would abuse the gullible, so that the false coverings by which he has tried to acquire favor would not cause iniquitous prejudice to the cause and injure the truth. For my part I also hide my name so that I would not seem to make people believe me only because of who I am, being one who moves readers and has weight in these matters.

He puts forth a certain peace offering and declares that he brings an easy and short means of deciding all the differences that annoy the church today. I cry out to myself here: What more can this chatterer say? Who can supply such pretty promises echoing from a full throat? Yet, if at times he brings some good thing, I am not of a mind to reject it.

It is true one should look closely before misjudging such a person, who, having been educated by proper experience and then having drifted here and there, has finally found his port of assurance to which he beckons and invites others. But above all, we must guard ourselves from this place that appears to be a safe port, lest we would find ourselves abused and falling into banks of quicksand where we will be lost. Also, truly, those who have a little judgment will quickly know that it is better to be rudely tormented by many dangers of sea, than to sink in the bogs to which this good man, this father so expert, points us in place of a port.

But because he is confident that all will be enchanted by his good speaking, he calls upon us to bear whatever disagreements we have with him, as he supports us when we disagree with him. He presents himself as a notable person, granted authority, and with whose opinion one cannot disagree, and he demands in return to be able freely to reject all that does

not please him. And see here such fair and false modesty, and how laudable he is to suppress his name so that his luster would not overwhelm us. But the good man without a name is noticeable by a fine title, saying that from his young age he was strongly thoughtful in observing the rituals of the church, and all things of such sort, and that from nature, or rather by a divine movement, he greatly detested all superstition. Thus we see a marvelously happy nature, and an unparalleled meeting of qualities, that however much all the world was in darkness, only he himself has the clear vision.

There was by and by a moderation and gravity more than manly; for although he had such hatred for the corruptions that were being added to the ceremonies, nevertheless, as to the policy of the church, which for the most part consists in these ceremonies, he would desire nothing be taken away from her and put low, but rather reformed and replaced in its purity. Who is it who would dare contradict him given that he is of mature age, seeing how almost from his infancy he has had an angelic skill, and was given unparalleled prudence? It is why he fears to attribute to nature such an excellence, although in his doubting he does glorify himself, given that nature guided him here. One cannot help but think that it was Balduin speaking, seeing that he always was strong in having some reverence for the ceremonies.

Now, in order to seat himself more as usurper in the office of master Reformer, he masks himself by playing the role of a valiant man with authority. And once again in this way he is not a little greedy to magnify his subtle and sharp judgment, that before deliberate discussion he acts as if he wants to know the issue of these things. He charges without restraint those who seek to correct false and lying opinions, accusing them of being without restraint and exceeding all limits. It would be amazing if such a singular severity to note a hidden vice does not strike fear in all sorts of men, and suppress them, and force each of them to be quiet.

Finally, having examined diligently and attentively the writings of one party and the other (he truly says), and weighing all of this indifferently in good fairness, he comes between like an arbitrator, and condemns both of the parties with great vehemence and excess. Observe, because he has labored to say he often advises in this fashion, that, during times when dispute and debate are engaged in until it is a hot fire, it seemed to him to be a fine beginning of his primary work to acquire the reputation of a complete man and to quench with a singular moderation. In this way therefore, in order to demonstrate that he comes in a sober spirit to make this censure, he says that all statements he brings are not more for one party than the other. But also note that he has otherwise shown himself to have an ardor as great as those whom he accuses as exceeding limits, and in so doing, he increases the heat in a kind of phantom's game. Will this cause men to believe that

he is some Angel descended from heaven? It only requires a few words from me to refute his frivolous, affected, and ridiculous arrogance.

To show that I am not unduly causing him grief, I intend to proceed very precisely in rejecting a man who seems to desire some certain reformation and to further the purpose that pure religion might again be in fashion. But before addressing that, I must discourse a little on the subtle words of this fox who seeks to subdue men by trickery. For the present I do not enter into discussion with those with whom he is trying to ingratiate himself, and by whom he hopes to be celebrated, because he is the one who desires to make the first accusations in this matter. I will not guess what compensation he may have proposed to them consistent with his burning ambition and the avarice that inflamed his presumptions. There are a thousand witnesses who do not forget his duplicity, who know who is giving him orders, and to whom he obliges and promises his service to their commands; in short, to whom he made his book a present.

For because he is such a master, and such a servant, after having remonstrated at the beginning that it would be impossible to otherwise appease the fervent troubles of the Kingdom of France except by removing certain very heavy abuses, he bragged of having in hand some ingenious method for dashing the undertakings of the faithful, and to weaken what he calls their violent efforts. We ought not be surprised at his highbrow attempts, given that he wanted to make the Jaquet³ and flatter his new master, to whom this imaginative work speaks. For he hoped six months before, when he had started to think on this work, that his daily discussions would almost come to be a proverb, so that those who would oppose his reformation would be thought the inconsiderate men. He was therefore quite ready to use the appearance of troubles for the purpose of breaking the intentions of the faithful: because there is no quicker means to stop things that begin in good course than to make a fog that obscures the light.

He agrees it is quite true that there needs to be reformation; but he also believes that the proposed remedies are more dangerous than the sickness, and he argues that by pursuing the abuses too severely and to a rigorous exactitude, the recovery will be made worse—and perhaps kill the patient. But those who desire that the pure service of God would be restored in France wait today on this sole point, yearning that the church would be clean of the filth and infections by which she is vilely polluted.

Instead, he freely puts forth an opposing principle: that these are important matters that ought to be considered over a long time. For although religion is corrupted by many abuses

3. Probably a reference to the pilgrimage of "The Way of St. James" in northwestern Spain. At that time, Pilgrims were referred to as "Jacquets" after the French name for James: "Jacques."

and the church is being made dangerously sick, it is not allowable to beat back the holy and sacred authority of the Roman church nor to decry the troubled state of the Western church that depends on her. Because one cannot, without crime of schism and apostasy, infringe upon the continuation and perpetual succession that has become hardened since the times of the Apostles until today. He states there is no fault in agreeing to remain in the farce. In this pleasing way, playing games, he would dash the efforts of the poor faithful by the making their allegations appear vain, saying it is necessary to look for what is profitable. But whether this pleasant person, masked by the title of a master, is actually promoting peace by the ruse put forth in his book, all who have eyes will easily know by the discourse that they read.

The sum of all that he gathers in his book is that one cannot make a very certain judgment of Scripture and its true meaning. In the first place, the readers are here to consider that those who would put Scripture, on its own, in a very high place, would also have to depend for their judgment, in part, on something else. As for this line of thinking, I confess freely that Scripture does not give us leave from God to abolish the gift of prophecy, and that it is necessary to hold the rule of St. Peter, that the oracles of God that have been entrusted to us by Scripture are not for private interpretation,⁴ because prophecy never formerly was carried by human will, but by holy men who spoke under power of the Holy Spirit. But this skillful “Reformer” draws us to another side in his rounds: it is that Scripture has no weight unless aided by the deliberations of men. In this fashion, after he has pretended to be one who esteems Scripture, he comes cleverly to place the decrees of men over it. This he gives the honorable title “Catholic Tradition,” so that the “unwritten truth,” as he calls it, is sufficient alone to decide differences in Religion. And I am not ignorant that this is the old song,

4. 2 Peter 1:20. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references are taken from the margin notes of the *Opuscules* edition.

5. Perhaps a reference to Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa (1122–10 June 1190) of the German Holy Roman Empire. Barbarossa means “red beard” in Italian, and the name implied fear and respect in northern Italy.

6. Pliny the Elder writes that Nero, apparently quite nearsighted, used an emerald stone against his eye, claiming that it improved his view of gladiator games. Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History*, Book 37, Chap. 16 “Smaragdus,” by John Bosstock, M.D., F.R.S., H.T. Riley, Esq., B.A., Ed. (1855)

7. Isaiah 45:19.

8. 2 Peter 1:19.

9. 2 Timothy 3:16–17.

10. John 20:31.

11. Deuteronomy 30:15.

12. Psalm 19:9 in the margin; verse 8 is the correct reference.

13. The French reads: “en cachette.”

14. 2 Corinthians 4:6.

so often repeated, by which the impiety of the papacy has been sustained for 400 years by its accomplices and lawyers. But because our “Red Beard,”⁵ as he has a forehead of iron and a heart of steel (if one can tolerate my heavy manner of speaking), can speak as what was said about the eye-stone of Emperor Nero, “he put it in front as a new thing”⁶ forged in his shop; I bear not the least envy toward him for the praise given to him for the old tricks he feeds upon, seeing that Scripture is notoriously trampled underfoot with a villainous mockery when it is not esteemed in itself instead of holding that all authority comes from whatever pleases men to speak of it.

When we encounter this silliness—or rather—these sacrilegious blunders, we would frankly counter with what is often authentically pronounced by the Spirit of God regarding the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel. That the Law proposes the way of life and death, that it is a clear flame, and a very certain light to the faithful for directing their feet, that it gives wisdom to the weak and small, that it is the faithful witness of God, that its commandments are good counselors, that God did not at all speak in secret, that he did not at all say in vain to the posterity of Jacob: “Seek me.”⁷ That what the Prophets wrote is like a candle that lights the darkness.⁸ That Scripture is profitable to teach, to reprove, and to instruct in justice, to the end that the man of God would be made whole and complete.⁹ That the smaller collection of books of the Gospel had been written so that we may believe, and believe it to the obtaining of eternal life in the name of Christ.¹⁰ If the Spirit’s carrying of the law is not clear and certain, it is without cause that Moses said that this is the rule to look to for life and death.¹¹ If it is made doubtful by bent corners, then David was wrong to write that it enlightened his eyes,¹² so much that it gives wisdom even to the most small and weak. If it is doubtful and without certainty, it will not witness faithfully to what is right. If its commandments hold disciples in suspense, how could they be counselors? If the doctrine of it is a hidden and enclosed thing, what Isaiah said would be false: that God does not speak to them “in secret.”¹³ And if some rascal comes playing his rounds to obscure it, the Apostle reprimands him, saying that the clarity of Scripture puts such men in darkness.¹⁴ If Scripture alone were not sufficient for certainty and resolve, what is the point of the Apostle’s magnificent preaching of the utility of Scripture for the perfection of doctrine? Finally, how does this reliance on tradition agree with the truth that what was written is sufficient for the closing of faith by which we obtain salvation, and that without it one cannot have assured understanding?

But before getting ahead of ourselves, it is necessary for us to refute in a few words our master “Reformer.” The heresies, he says, that were raised a little after the times of the Apostles, were driven back not by the words of Scripture, but by the

sound intelligence of those of the time. As for me, I confess the last part of this truth, but I hold strongly and firmly that the heretics were vanquished by the express words and complete clarity of Scripture. He would say that the Arians, in denying that the spoken word signified a Hypostasis or Person, brought reasonings equally probable to those of the holy doctors who held the right faith. In this he reveals advocacy and defense of a detestable impiety. Because if we let pass what he says, he will follow with saying that the Divinity of Christ does not have foundation in anything but what is decreed by the Council. Who else sees here only a profane man, who in seeming to say one thing maliciously shakes and reverses this principle of our faith? Saint John shows us that the eternal Word of God, that from the beginning was the life and God with God, is made flesh. Our master "Reformer" laughs at this and he truly acts as if he blows his nose at the use of such a clear sentence to oppose Arius. If there were ever a thing expressed in human language in significant terms, when the Word was called God, this manner of speaking denotes quite clearly the essence. And when it adds that he was with God, it clearly and openly demonstrates the person.¹⁵ Well now, what merit is there in a man who would believe him, when he despoils the eternal essence of Christ, and the hypostatic distinction of Christ's essence from that of the Father, by abusing the testimony of Scripture?

Similar impudence shows itself in other passages that I recite. He chirps¹⁶ that, without the tradition of the Fathers, one can accept plausible explanations from one or the other party of the phrase, "the Word was made flesh," as if it were not shown clearly that the person of Christ has two natures. But if God was made man, then Nestorius was right in his impiety when he made two Christs, or a double Christ. Also easily discerned is the fact that the Divinity is not at all created, contrary to the humanity that he created. And if to the contrary, Eutyches or Servetus says, using cavils, that the Word was changed into flesh, there is a ready solution that he is always God manifest in flesh; that in Christ resides the fullness of divinity; that his flesh was the temple of God. How necessary is it for him to borrow from elsewhere what the doctrine of Scripture furnishes us?

Our master "Reformer" finds ambiguity and enigmatic obscurity in such a proposition as, "I and my Father are one."¹⁷ Christ, in magnifying his power in the engagement on which rests the assurance of faith, says that he is one with the Father. What impudence is this to make believe that, in these words so clear and express, one cannot find the sense, as if the Holy Spirit had only thrown out a confused echo? In fact, our case would be very sad if we did not have firm certainty in the Law, Prophets, and Gospel. The good "Reformer" denies the one doctrine that can completely remedy the errors. And how does Isaiah speak to the contrary? When the service of God was

corrupted by diverse filth and superstitions, and the truth was overwhelmed by falsehood, he leaves his disciples nothing else but the Law and the testimony for fixing such large wrongs.¹⁸ Now, accordingly, the Gospel puts forth more clearly all the sum of piety. There, without doubt, we are furnished more evidently and assuredly what can rebut all errors. And even so Saint Paul arms the Church for all combat, contenting himself in calling upon the Word of God, the watchfulness of the Spirit.¹⁹ Unwritten Tradition is a hopeless novelty.

But I pray the readers would prudently consider into what labyrinth we would be stuffed by such abuse, so that they would be on guard from it. He confesses that the doctrines found in sacred Scriptures are true and catholic, but he esteems it necessary to receive also in great reverence and certainty of faith what was derived from the invention and intelligence of that era, coming straight to us from the time of the Apostles. But what does this serve, to hold as true what the senses would hide? Very well, all that is contained in the Holy Scriptures would be the catholic truth. But if some point comes up in debate, because what is written there might be considered a little flexible and be made to turn like a wax nose, one could not determine anything without having recourse to tradition. What would then become of the principal points of our faith?

I will bring forth only three examples: the corruption of our nature and the miserable servitude of the soul under the tyranny of the flesh; the free justification; and the Sacrifice of Christ. These are things only touched upon obscurely in the books of the very ancient Doctors. One cannot draw from them anything certain on these things. Since then have surfaced pernicious errors regarding free will, the merits of works, and propitiation. The questions we deal with today among so many people were not at all addressed by these advocates and intercessors. In that time, one had not yet installed Priests who offer Christ to the Father for the reconciliation of the world. And Satan well and closely twists the good Doctors in these indecent questions, and by the method of certain dreaming fanatics scattered from one side to another, the ancient Doctors, in refuting these things, became so engrossed that they gave less heed to the principal points. And because of all the errors that distort their writings from one side to another, they are now for the most part out of bounds, and we can only partially receive fruit from their books.

If it is necessary to push upon us their tradition and to teach their doctrine of salvation, all our engagement will be without

15. John 1:1, 14.

16. "gazouille" in the French.

17. John 10:30.

18. Isaiah 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

19. Ephesians 6:17.

vigor, because we never grasp from them the following: how we are reconciled to God; how we are illuminated by the Holy Spirit; the duty of obedience to the Law; how the obedience of Christ was freely imputed to us—the effectiveness of which is in his sacrifice of death and his continual intercession for us. One finds for all of these a plain and simple declaration in Scripture. If one were to believe this new master, all the points of understanding necessary to salvation would remain partially buried and no longer have certainty, because no tradition can confirm them. God knows if this would not bring about blindness in the full clarity of the Sun.

There is another thing like a dangerous trap: when he wants us to receive resolutely as proper interpretations of Scripture the ancient judgments of men made from the time of the beginning of the Gospel. What would become of Saint Paul's statement that "faith is by hearing and hearing by the word of God?" If our "Reformer" replaces the Word of God with the common consent of the Church, it is without question an evasion, given that Saint Paul expressly and deliberately distinguishes the traditions of men from the oracles of God.

We agree first between us that there is the Word of God. But if our "Reformer" responds that this includes what is written and what is not written, what mark will one give to this second species so that one cannot doubt it? He would say it is a great crime not to believe in the unwritten truth.²⁰ But there is no method for discerning it to show whether or not it is mixed with lies. What will become of the poor consciences that have been ensnared in such destruction that they cannot know which of their confessions they are to believe?

The good "Reformer" hardly wins a good hearing from men if he responds that there are three marks for discerning the phantasm of Catholic tradition: its Ancientness, its Universal Hearing, and the Consent of All. Being so poor a Dialectician, he tears from one piece to make the second, for what is the difference between Universal Hearing and Universal Consent? If only some part is consented to, this would not serve as a mark of the tradition of the Church. But in pardoning this ignorance, I would like him to tell us this: if only one of three marks is sufficient, which one would he first like to choose? If it must rest on Ancientness alone, all the most monstrous heresies from shortly after the time of the Apostles would be the Catholic faith. If it must be the three marks taken together, it is not possible to compare other articles of our faith with those in which there is no disagreement with the Papiſts. In this fashion one stretches "universal" to find itself nowhere.

Thus it appears he is not only disguising the matters, but also is seeking to dazzle the eyes of the simple by vain illusions

20. Marginal note in original states: "according to the Catholic Tradition."

21. Most likely a reference to Malachi 1:11.

under this false title of Tradition, and by trying to produce a strange confusion with a diverse mixture. Well, how much honesty is there in putting in first place the phantasm of Ancientness that ultimately resembles a monstrous pile of errors? For if we ask what this Ancientness is that determines what must be obeyed, our "Reformer" will bring up stupid foolishness under the names of Ignacius, Clement, Linus, and similar men. I am staggered to see that he does not blush and is not a little ashamed in asking us to accept the confused and thick obscurity of the ancient expositors over the clarity that radiates from the simplicity of Scripture. I say that in this use of Ancientness lies the origin of the Kabala that seduced the Jews. The same thing produced the sect of the Pharisees, who were sickened by their strange fantasies of the Law and the Prophets. And from this same foundry comes to us the Papacy. The religion of Mohammed rests upon nothing else. By these examples we are more than adequately admonished how it is a dangerous thing to detour just a little from the pure and right Word of God.

And next, he puts forth something else. He wants doctrine to be received without question if it is more or less received by all the churches and confirmed by plausible reasons drawn from the sacred Scriptures—even though many of good spirit would be able to come up with equally plausible reasons to refute it. It is certain that this impostor seeks to weave a spider's web by his fair counsel, but he wishes us to accept seriously for consideration such tricks by which he assaults us. Without restraint he later puts the seat of Rome in place of the universal Church. He therefore wants all the Western Church (as he calls it) unsparingly to support all kinds of impiety which we, by good right, condemn; and he wants all liberty of inquiry to be taken away. But against any such reason that you might have to oppose what does not seem reasonable, he puts forth this shield: "the consent of the greater party."

Of course, this reformer prudently tempers this by adding the qualifier, "plausible confirmation drawn from the sacred Scriptures." It is mockery. Because they do not in the least blush at the largest absurdity put forward. If we say the Mass is a sacrilege because in it one makes believe that Christ is sacrificed, a "plausible confirmation" is produced: as in the fact that Melchisedec offered bread and wine, and that the Prophet prophesied that the nations from the East to the West will offer to God a pure sacrifice.²¹ We may reject this as foolishness, but under this approach whatever appears sufficiently plausible to anyone provides the "firm authority" to hold to the contrary.

The fourth variation of the question he puts forth seems to be somewhat of a retraction. For if some doctrine is not supported by as clear a witness in Scripture as he would like, but it is nevertheless supported by the grand and ancient consent of the Church, and today is received in the

principal part in the West, as long as it is "not manifestly contrary" to the Holy Scriptures, he would have no vigorous opposition rising to refute it, nor would he desire that the peace would be troubled over such things. In saying this, at first glance he seems to want to distinguish between the ordinances of today's Church and those of the ancient Church. However, one sees openly his variability when, in expressing his sharp desire to remove all doubt under the heading of "the consent of the greater party," he does not make a single mention of the present times. Notice how his malice is demonstrated more viciously when now he tries to ornament the clear witness of Scripture with these embellishments that he earlier argued must be received on their own. And where does this fine judgment lead? We note how he speaks of new inventions that do not have support in antiquity. He does not want one to reject these afterwards if they are not "manifestly repugnant" to the Holy Scriptures. Why does he thrust forth this word "manifestly," if not to distract one from noticing the contradiction here, provided that one word would not contradict another? If, for example, someone adores Baalim, we would not be able to say to him that this repugnancy is "manifest" because he does not distinctly affirm multiple gods.

The arrogance of the Censor extends still further. If some implausible opinion is totally received, he does not think it ought to be debated with ferocity; but instead it must be debated peaceably in conference with docile and temperate men. Without doubt, by these pretty words, he minimizes the greatness of the evil when he applies the title of "plausible opinion" to things that are false, perverted, and controverted. When there are furious debates, is it not to show these things frankly to the people so that they would be on guard? The "Reformer" cannot suffer that such errors would be made plain except among the learned, so that those who pride themselves in their opinions developed in such private deliberations would strip knowledge of the truth from all the flock of Christ.

Yet he permits more license than he ought to those who are given to arrogance and curiosity. In a dispute over plausible things, each would be free to hold what he would. Although, down here, we would not acknowledge anyone to be our master in the sense that our faith would reside there, or that we must be made to be dependent upon his will, such modesty and sobriety would be no better than a license to sustain errors. To look his best, all that he says up to this point is very well disguised, so that some doctrine put forward can be related to this or that so as to please everyone. See how by his claim to desire purity he tries to insinuate himself into the grace of the readers. By such vanity he would win some; yet in so doing he has descended to the level of beasts.

Now he implores us to hear his advice on opinions that

were contrary to the Holy Scriptures and traditions of the ancient Church, which by error, imprudence, or even by ambition, were in these later and corrupt times put forward. He does not deny that one should avoid and flee them as leaven. Yet he does not at all think a private man has a duty to recklessly dispute over these when the offense following is certain and there is no hope of utility or advancement. Would that the readers consider diligently that of all the infinite pile of errors found everywhere, not one would be outside of this description. Already he has spoken of corruptions from later times, and what he speaks of now he restricts only to the latest time and only those very corrupted. But of all the errors that we debate today, and which are obstinately defended by the Papists, I confess that after great pain not one can be found that is not at least 100 years old.

I do not yet speak of the Traditions, of which we will speak more later. Satan, long before we and our Fathers were born, forged the false and wicked doctrines by which all religion is weakened and corrupted. No matter from what side we might assail the Papacy, it would have this as a defense: that it must never be called leaven unless it was introduced in recent times. We would say that the pure and right invocation of God is corrupted when one has recourse to the intercession of the dead. They could then argue that this is a tradition as well, and therefore not leaven. We say that it is a tyrannical law and full of a detestable audacity—clearly of diabolical rage—to say that each one is required each year to confess all his sins to a certain Priest. But more than a hundred years ago, Pope Innocent made this ordinance to the Council of Lateran. We put such a thing forward against Transubstantiation, the response will be quick, that a hundred years was long enough in time to establish it. We see therefore how this good "Reformer," in pleasing flattery, buries all leaven by not allowing it to be called leaven.

Also, the exceptions he puts forward are not at all placed without fraud, error, imprudence, or ambition: for if one opens something for dispute, he would refute the discussion by using one of these three points. And would it be defended if the error comes first by avarice, or by the ruse and subtlety of such an Epicurean? We see how with twisted words he dazzles people's eyes as if with brandy. But I ask you, with what audacity does he hold what he has forged in his brain? He does not deny that one must flee, as if from leaven, the manifestly evil doctrines that might have arisen two or three days ago; but we see from his position that those who recognize such errors are not to enter lightly a debate against such challengers.²² What does this lead to? By this disloyal silence, one who ought to shine and show a good example to others betrays the salvation of his brothers.

22. "Venans" in the French.

What follows a little later is said a little more honestly: that it is necessary to speak freely and constantly what is proper when the glory of God and the utility of the moment call for it. But fire and water will agree more easily than these tortured and obscure words that teach that sometimes men of sane judgment should hold hidden what they know, and sometimes they must speak freely. We thus see praise for hiding the ruse and using deception, because he tells us that it is not at all necessary to always say what one knows.

When coming to the ceremonies that have been ordained by Christ for holding the union of people under the new covenant, called the Sacraments, he is of a view that they ought to be purely and entirely protected; that nothing must be added to them as if they were missing something or imperfect, nor should any part be diminished as if it were superfluous. This is somewhat true, although it is not everything. By a sleight-of-hand thrown from the side, he allows all sorts of fashions or manners of conduct in the Church. But this half-truth is the same shame from which he escaped, but is turned upside down. He adds in another line that the Apostles and their successors received authority to establish ceremonies to be added to the Sacraments for ornament. This man, therefore, having just confessed that one must never add, now not only receives the traditions made at pleasure, but he also recommends them. Yet here he follows a subtle method: it is necessary to receive the added things, provided that one does not think that the Sacraments would be diminished or imperfect. In this manner, by some mixing, the Sacraments would be changed almost into a new form, and there would be nothing at all wrong with this, provided that one cannot overtly state that what Christ has ordained is defective or imperfect.

Of course, I know how ancient are the origins of the raising of the bread, the holy oil, and also the Paschal candles, to all which were later added spit mixed with salt and many other villainies. If someone rejects all such inventions, the response would be reduced to one word: that by "good counsel" they were added to the ordinance of Christ; because the action of Baptism, being of cold faith, was not itself enriched by some

splendor. It is as if Christ by mistake had forgotten its utility and did not look ahead to see that water was not enough to represent the grace of the Holy Spirit, but also required oil and the light of a candle.

Finally, according to the judgment of this "Reformer," the observation of the ceremonies must be perpetual, because their causes are perpetual, coming from the beginning of the Church by common consent. But I do not see at all how this can accord with the following page where he says that some customs, which otherwise were observed by almost all the world, have been little by little abolished because they were not of great weight, or were no longer useful because of changing times, or likewise were turned into abuse by the intemperance of the people. Where, therefore, is the perpetual reason from which he draws a law of perpetual observation? Will the entire world submit itself to an inconstant man who suddenly forgets and contradicts himself in appeasing his preference for diverse opinions?

But Saint Augustine does this for him. What did he say? If the authority of the Holy Scripture commands something, without doubt we must follow what we read.²³ Scripture by itself will therefore confirm the conscience, and likewise will not be useless, seeing that it does not at all aid a non-Scriptural tradition. But if all the church throughout the world (says the same Saint Augustine) had become accustomed to doing something, it is an intolerable rage to remove it in doubt.²⁴ This holy person has esteemed that it was useful for keeping the peace, regarding the little customs and ceremonies over which none would want to debate. For here are the words of this holy man: "one retains some statutes that are not written at all, not by the Apostles nor by the Councils, but of which the authority is great in the Church, like when the passion of our Lord, his resurrection and ascension into heaven, and the coming of the Holy Spirit, are celebrated once every year, and if it finds itself some other similar thing that would be kept by all the Church in lieu of it being scattered here and there."²⁵

What shame is this, I pray you, that under shadow of such a few items one seeks to create an infinite pile? This is what our imposter maintains. But by such modesty he sought to lay the foundation of a liberal complaint that he uses later, that the Church, which was made free by God, is pressed by servile charges, so much that the condition of the Jews was more tolerable, because their sentence of servitude was always subject to legal charges and not to human presumption. But even if Saint Augustine deferred more to the custom than was necessary, did he seek to soil the Sacraments ordained by Christ by the inventions of men? Because he does not speak of all ceremonies, but of those customs whose use is left free in the Church, as he explains himself. As for us, we do not reject also the ancient customs that can be indifferently used because they accord with the Word of God. But regarding superstition or wicked

23. Augustine, *Confessions and Letters of St. Augustine with a Sketch of His Life and Work*, NPNF1 1:303, Letter 54 (Also called Book I of Replies to Questions of Januarius), Chap. 5, "I answer, therefore, that if the authority of Scripture has decided which of these methods is right, there is no room for doubting that we should do according to that which is written; and our discussion must be occupied with a question, not of duty, but of interpretation as to the meaning of the divine institution." See, also, *On Baptism, Against the Donatists* (Book III), Chapter 6: "Therefore, when the truth is made manifest, custom must give way to truth." NPNF1 4:439.

24. Augustine, NPNF1 1:302: "In like manner, if the universal Church follows any one of these methods, there is no room for doubt as to our duty; for it would be the height of arrogant madness to discuss whether or not we should comply with it."

25. Augustine, NPNF1 1:300.

abuse, we seek to abolish them. We know that the things that concern order and honesty are not required to be held because of human traditions, but because they were divinely approved. But what does this do to what our imposter finely claims? The thought of this false cover to hide all sorts of corruption never came to the thoughts of this holy person.²⁶

He adds yet another villainous mockery, that Saint Paul and Barnabas had not only commanded the Church to keep the express commandments of God, but also to obey as much the decrees and ordinances from the Elders as the Apostles.²⁷ First it is necessary to consider some of the decrees spoken of by Saint Luke; and second, to what end had Saint Paul exhorted the Churches to keep them. The quarrels and debates (which by a horrible dissipation menaced all the Churches of Asia and Greece toward a final ruin) are shown to have been calmed down. And nothing had been fixed that would not conform to the Word of God, namely: that the Gentiles were not at all under the demands of the legal ceremonies, but that they only abstain from blood and from strangling. Saint Paul had signified that he would obey this commandment,²⁸ but for a certain time, until the faith of them who were too given to Moses would be more fortified. And of course Saint Paul a little later abolished what he had earlier counseled to keep for maintaining the peace.

But it is amazing that our Censor puts forth such an example, he who would not permit one to omit anything of the sort of common practices received from the ancient Church. Tell me, good man, which of these two is for you²⁹ the greater recommendation: to observe what the Apostles had commanded and what Saint Paul ordained as a firm foundation, or that which is put forth by ignorant men? If you prefer the Apostles, why for the life of you do you use blood liberally and only seek to abolish the Holy Oil? And yet you bring up Saint Paul as if he were the one who kept traditions?

As for the other ancient customs from which traces appear, yet which have been diverted from their proper end and usage, he thinks that they must be kept for the purpose of maintaining peace and unity until such time as those who, under authority of a legitimate assembly, would reinstitute them in their original condition or have them totally removed. See how finely he dissimulates. It is necessary to warn the readers that, under this heading, he includes all the buffoonish gestures more agreeable to monkeys than to men, which even so would be painstakingly received only in a profane game.³⁰ Yet not one of them does not flow from an evil fountain; they certainly are nothing but profanations of sacred things. Good jester, what you claim to desire, and what covers your mockeries of piety—that is, what you say you hold for peace—we would far better to be rid of than have the church be full of treason.

As for his desire that some very ancient customs—which in the past were meticulously kept and then little by little were

abolished—would be put back into use by a legitimate authority, and with as little trouble as possible: if he would openly declare which customs he speaks of, he would have given us some sign of being an honest man. It would not only be good, but necessary, that the cup of Holy Communion would be opened back up to the people, since it has been disgracefully removed from them. And I do not at all doubt that intertwined here is merely his wanting to acquire favor. But how clearly does he proceed in reestablishing the cup of Holy Communion? He remains in the Papacy only as a means of taking communion. How much heart-break must he have endured in a single moment of time? And how is he freely heart-broken, seeing how little that it does, regarding that which Christ conjoined to be inseparable? This nice jabberer wants us to depend upon the will of an evil clergy as if it were a light thing that we ought not trouble ourselves over. But there is no doubt that by a similar malice to this, having specified nothing, he seeks to oppress poor souls by new burdens.

Now we look at the particular customs that Saint Augustine said could be kept, that each church would be free to retain those that it had become accustomed to. It is sometimes expedient that there would be some variety so that religion would not be constrained by external ceremonies, provided that envy would be removed; and that those who have a desire for novelty would not lust after something contrary to what the others have. But, while stressing that nothing but what is clean and whole would come from Augustine,³¹ it is necessary for the readers to know that there is another issue in these times of ours, since an infinitude of superstitions, one upon another, have been put forth to overturn the service of God. It is also necessary to consider closely how valuable it is to command nothing against the Faith or against good conscience.

Recognizing that God's law commands the form of his worship, and by this he expresses detestation of all false gods, of course it is a repugnant thing to say that in pleasing men something must be added to his Commandments. The vile buffoonery of the Papacy soils all religion. This also is not a thing suitable to good conscience. If some customs are useful and of good faith, I confess that the error that detains the spirits of some must not stop those who are well instructed to use only that which is good—provided that it would not become a common error confirmed by use. But because superstition is

26. Referring to Augustine.

27. Acts 16:4.

28. Acts 15:22, 29.

29. Calvin alternates between directly addressing the author of the book and referring to him in the third person. When he addresses him directly, he uses "tu" instead of "vous," which was common in Middle French.

30. "qui meme seroyent à grand peine recues en un jeu profane."

31. The French says "this holy man," obviously referring to Augustine.

bindingly connected with many ceremonies which in themselves are good, anyone who would want to keep them shows in effect that he is of those who fall short. In this way, a false opinion, commonly received, will soil by abuse customs that otherwise are good. It becomes not only necessary to flee from it in your personal observation, but also that the fault be liberally noted out of fear that simple people would be hardened by it more and more. For it is not proper for a zealous Christian to say, "To each his own," without also admonishing the others to be on their own guard.

Similarly, what is alleged of an Italian writer, that abuse does not take away good use, will not be true if one holds to it without exception: because it is clearly commanded to us to prudently watch that we would not offend the infirm brothers by our example, and that we should never undertake what would be illicit. For Saint Paul prohibits offending the brothers in eating flesh that was sacrificed to idols,³² and speaking to this particular issue he shows a general rule that we are to keep ourselves from troubling the consciences of the weak by a bad or damaging example. One might speak better and more wholesomely if he were to say that what God himself ordains may not be abolished for wrong use or abuse that is committed against it. But even here, it is necessary to abstain from these things if, by later human ordinance, they have become corrupt with error, and if their use is harmful or scandalizes the brothers.

Here I marvel how this "Reformer," after granting that superstitions sometimes have such strong popularity that it is necessary to remove from the realm of man those things once ordained by public authority (as we read of Hezekiah doing with the bronze serpent), finally does not consider even a little that his shrewdness is a horror to the ways of good action: as if in defending supportable rituals, he would oblige that all superstitions should be considered as safe and whole because they are weighty. For what is there in the papacy now that would not resemble the bronze serpent, even if it did not begin that way?³³ Moses had it made and forged by the commandment of God: he had it kept for a sign of recognition. Among the virtues of Hezekiah told to us is that he had it broken and reduced to ash.³⁴ The superstitions for the most part, against which true servants of God battle today, are spreading from here to who knows where as covered pits in the ground. They are filled with detestable errors that can never be erased unless their use is taken away. Why, therefore, do we not confess simply what is true, that this remedy is necessary for taking away filth from the church?

32. 1 Corinthians 10:28.

33. Numbers 21:9.

34. 2 Kings 18:4.

35. Colossians 2:16; Galatians 5:1.

36. "in here" in the French.

He adds that there are many traditions of little profit that should nevertheless be kept to maintain concord and unity and to avoid causing scandal. While this might have some appearance of truth, he will show by the continuation of his talk that this is a mere trick. Because he freely adds an exception later: "If there were nothing in it that would be profitable, or that the observation of it might be particularly damaging or impossible, it is necessary to look to the intention of the Law-Giver." By this manner the laws of different foods prohibiting the eating of flesh, of eggs, of milk, and of butter, are defended because they are not considered damaging to the public. All of which he is willing to accept as being of no importance to a healthy man, and if consciences are bound and oppressed by decrees and traditions of men, it does not matter, seeing this does no damage to the health of the body. Briefly stated, his position is, in as much as we can conveniently carry the tyrannical loads, we are obliged to bear them. What are we to make of Saint Paul's statement, that none condemns you in eating or drinking?³⁵ Question: Why do they still burden us with these ordinances? Question: Do you hold firm—would you at no point once again be bound by the sentence of servitude? See how this handsome zealot for reformation boasts of himself so fiercely.

As for the rest, adding a clause that regarding bad and vicious practices concerning religion and service to God, those who know what is bad in them can particularly abstain from them. Though he seems to have something to say, it is as if by a malign spirit he seeks to minimize what deserves to be called a great detestation. For what is this? If I see my brothers being betrayed into perdition by one who profanes the service of God, will I allow this without saying a word? Here is the lovely reason for what he remonstrates as bad practice: supportable ceremonies are condemned by those who, in their hatred of superstitions, flee something that they think is pernicious and impious. It is true that there might be something here, but in the discussion we are dealing with, nobody is arguing anything except to reject that which is vilely corrupted and manifestly engulfed in impiety.

Well, here is someone who is not afraid to understand where the fundamentals he puts forth lead. He shows it himself quite evidently, presenting to us in full force the reign of the Pope over the Church in the communion that we must maintain strictly and by an inviolable bond. Of these he concludes that although the Papacy may abound in diverse showings of impiety, those who would separate from it are all schismatics. In the first place, he assumes the Western Church and the Roman Church are as one, as he would not recognize in the West a single church that does not put itself under the domination of the Pope. He confirms his speech by saying that in the Roman Catholic Church³⁶ we are regenerated by the Baptism done to its citizens and members. Next, the Roman Church contains

the profession of Christianity, the authority of the Scriptures, and the Apostolic doctrine, where are found the principal articles of religion. Moreover, because the Sacraments are kept in this Church as Christ established them (although it is worth noting again this claim that this Church actually celebrates and dispenses the Holy Communion)³⁷ and, that in its observations of all sorts of ceremonies and manners of practice, all of these show yet an image of the ancient Church. Finally, because the Church is governed by priests or bishops (although these are devoid of the integrity of the ancients), the succession and continual line of this government extending from the times of the Apostles is still there.

In responding by a few words to each point, I say that it is an affront and trite juggling³⁸ to mock so vilely the world under the word "Church." Where the tyranny of the Papacy is overflowing, Christianity has been extinguished, and never would a man of good judgment deny it. So it follows that there is a Church that remains in some part elsewhere. The question is only where and up to what point? Our response is founded in good reason and very firm: although the ordinary ministration of baptism would be in the presence of false masked Pastors who oversee this, they do not merit any more authority than the Priests of Cybele or some other idol of Pagans.

There is no doubt that Jerusalem was not a true Church at the time when the Priests were made obsolete by the right rule of the service of God.³⁹ Also when one demands that the faithful have a duty to honor the authority of such a Church, and to hold it in esteem, it is clearly rebutted by the Prophets, who cry that one must recoil as far as possible from the evil conspiracies of such men. The same is necessarily true of the Papacy where there is also a temple, altar, and priest who sacrifices, but not as has been instituted by God. And such similarity would be more proper if one compared it to the state of the people of Israel when Jeroboam brought to it bastardized ceremonies and false service of God.⁴⁰ For although the ten tribes boasted bravely in their offering of sacrifices to God their Redeemer, and these good Levites were yearning to be esteemed as ministers of God, Jeroboam, the chief and primary author of this revolt, was condemned for his excuse. This new formality was not to turn people to the God of Abraham, but only to comfort them, so that they would never need to climb Mount Zion. If this is all that religion is, being made false and bastardized, it is to be detested by all the faithful.

Denying that in those times there was a Church among the Israelites seems to be very harsh. And the decree of God is to the contrary when he often pronounces that here were raised to him children,⁴¹ as it were, because Circumcision, which was the Sacrament of Adoption, was there in use. And it is the reason that when Josiah called to sound the trumpets for apostates in order to celebrate the Passover,⁴² he did not command that they needed to be circumcised again. Here

therefore is the circumcision that God put into the hands of his Church that resided in Israel. And God was there leaving this pledge, showing that there remains some remnant of the Church among the ten tribes. But while God did not want his grace to be completely effaced among this people, he did nothing to authorize the priesthood that had come there, as he makes very clear in the prophecies of Hosea.⁴³

I now would much desire to speak, in passing, on things touching the Church, and more will follow in greater detail; but it is necessary to speak of the traps here so that men who are poorly skilled would not think that, if the name of the Church is put before whatever evil prelates and a bastardized people have agreed to, it must be held as the Law. Note how the first argument, that is, that we are infants of the Roman Church because we have been regenerated by baptism in the Papacy, is rebutted: we see that those who were circumcised in Israel were obliged to come to Dan and Bethel and to commune with their assembly there. But they showed themselves at least to be good and right lovers of the true God in renouncing the altar of that temple made according to the will of men. We must likewise honor our Baptism, which was administered to us in the Papacy, by removing ourselves from such dissipation and collecting ourselves to the obedience of Christ, as much as is necessary for our good and to keep us from remaining in an evil obstinacy.

The second reason is still more of a joke: that in the Papacy one retains the name and confession of Christianity. And how is this? In all times have not heretics been found there? But this false boasting is so much less tolerable because it carries a vile mockery of the Name of God. As for the authority of Scripture, their answer is nimble: the Pope and his clergy confess that which they dare not deny, that it is necessary to believe Scripture, but only if they are to be the only expositors, and as long as one proves nothing by it, and only in what pleases them to find good. The ministers of Bethel could well take this same position in defending their sacrifice, seeing that in appearance they held to the holy and sacred authority of the Law.

As for the rest, when he affirms that the Apostolic doctrine still remains there in its entirety in the principal articles, how is this not a rank babbling? Oh how I wish that we would find

37. Calvin is being sarcastic here—as he has already demonstrated that the Roman Church does not properly observe the Lord's Supper.

38. "passe passe" in the French.

39. Calvin refers to the time of the Gospel.

40. See 1 Kings 12:27–33 (citation added).

41. Ezekiel 16:20: "Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter?"

42. 2 Kings 23:21. See also verse 15, in which Josiah destroys the altar installed by Jeroboam.

43. The entire book of Hosea is worth reading in this context.

great rest and that we could journey in happy tranquility. This miserable disciple of Lucian⁴⁴ will not find in all the world a single corner where he can have assurance. If he covers himself by his added exception, saying that he restricts himself to the principal articles when he speaks of doctrine, it is a blunder, as if it were yesterday's snow that we debate today against the Papists. Isaiah, speaking of the remission of sins, calls it the knowledge of Salvation.⁴⁵ Here we see the great price of the service of God, which we debate as well. All religion was ratified by the sacrifice of Christ. We cry that, in the Papacy, the virtue and excellence here have been vilely trampled underfoot. He would have us believe that the corruption of human nature and the servitude to which we are subjected as poor slaves are light things and of little consequence, as if the definition of faith and repentance were not the principal points of the Gospel. And as if faith—a singular gift from God and the fruit of gracious election—would be considered merely some discussion passing by in flight. It would take long to recite all in detail, but nothing is set forth more impudently than when he asserts that the principal articles of Faith subsist yet in their entirety in the Papacy.

The third mark of the Church which he says is found in the Papacy consists in the use of the Sacraments, which following his unbelievable impudence, he says in great boasting to be quite conformed to the institution of Christ. Because these are his actual words, that here one administers them according to how Christ instituted them. But one can never find something more contrary. Not without cause did Saint Mark and Saint Luke say that Baptism was preached,⁴⁶ because the Sacrament without the Word is a vain farce and an act without power to save. Similarly, speaking more properly, the spirit of the Sacrament is the Word, not in the way of the splashing of the priests of the Pope in their Baptism, of which the rite can hardly differ from some words of enchantment and sorcery. In speaking Latin to the people, they amount to being barbarians, seeing that according to Saint Paul, it is barbarous to hold discourse in an unknown language when one speaks in the assembly to the faithful.⁴⁷ And even more, they

44. Probably a reference to Lucian of Samosata, a bitterly sarcastic rhetorician and satirist.

45. See, e.g., Isaiah 33:6; 45:19–25 (citations added).

46. Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3.

47. See 1 Corinthians 14:11 (citation added).

48. As in “renunciation,” presumably a part of the Mass of Calvin's time.

49. “*Ephethah*” is how Calvin spells the word referring to a Roman Church ritual invoking the word “*Ephphatha*” used by Christ in Mark 7:34 in healing the deaf mute.

50. Mark 7:34.

51. Calvin appears to be saying that, for all the flaws that may be apparent in his baptism, and that of others, he grants that it is valid, but still rejects the practice of adding to it.

52. Although Calvin claimed to want to be anonymous, he reveals himself here.

constrain the laborers, the artisans, and the women to speak Latin, causing them in their conjurations to say over and over, at great effort, their *Abrenuncio*.⁴⁸ And the administration of Baptism as Christ ordained is said to be found here? As for the rest, with how many corruptions do they pollute it? I have confessed elsewhere that the Holy Oil and the Communion are things proceeding from an ancient custom. It is always necessary to confess that from time to time things detoured from the simple and plain institution of Christ, acknowledging how the introduction of pomp buries the cleansing ordained by Christ. But leaving these things aside, I ask our good “Reformer” to answer me, why perform the *Ephethah*, unless it is to be a manifest mockery of Christ?⁴⁹ To cause the mute man to be able to speak, Christ took his own saliva from his mouth and intermingled it with that of the other.⁵⁰ And here we see a buffoon come to counterfeit the miracle of Christ by putting his spittle on the eyes of infants. Is there a thing more removed from the ordinance of Christ? For all I have accommodated in speaking, allowing that my baptism is complete, and in sensing its fruit, I renounce the Holy Oil and other such filth.⁵¹

As for the Communion, he seems to approach it a little by a curve when he recognizes that it could seem that there is a little bit of corruption. But, that is to say, how little corruption? And then it seems? And then could? Oh such affected and made-up language that not even a prostitute would use! In this way, therefore, he is able to make it seem that there is only a little bit of corruption, when in the place of communication one has introduced excommunication; namely, holding back what Christ commanded be distributed among the faithful; when they hold his Supper once per year, and when they make a detestable divorce separating the cup from the bread. In this way, at their pleasure, they trim away the Holy Communion, as they do when they raise high the morsel of bread to make adoration in the presence of Christ; when here where Christ himself commanded to take, they make believe that they make an offering to God the Father; when they boast to themselves that they make a sacrifice that is applied to life and death that one may purchase; when in their Masses they open a bazaar and sell villainy, as when the Holy Communion of Christ was converted in the Mass of Saint Barbara and Saint Christopher. I plead to you, how do these juggling acts and diabolical enchantments conform to the institutions of Christ?

Following this, these criers, who rent or sell their language in defending the Papacy, put forth their greatest ammunition and the strongest rampart against us: namely, the continual succession of Bishops, which, if I wanted to treat in this place as if it were a thing of merit, it would end up being repetition. Well, I am not among those who take pleasure in saying the same thing a hundred times and never becoming bored with it. If someone finds himself shaken by such mockery, he may find recourse in my Institutes;⁵² and if the readers want

still to see advantage in it, they may take what I have written against the Interim of Germany.⁵³ There is only one thing that I would like to know from our good "Reformer": whether the Apostles have ordained for their successors priests who sacrifice Christ? Saint Paul glorified himself well in the sacrifices he administered, that by the sword of the Gospel he sacrificed the Gentiles to God, being to them a pure oblation.⁵⁴ But what form of this is found in the ordinances of the Papacy? It is a common thing found in the solemn words they use, "We give you power in offering to God the host that would be for making peace," etc. Never do they come in memory of the Apostles when they assign to others the Sacrifice of Christ—and in this manner they claim to give that which they have not received? In this way, therefore, for the purpose of continuing the succession, these who are now called Prelates vaunt themselves to be sacrificing Priests. But unless they are put away from the office of offering Christ, they have nothing in common with the Apostles. Or better said, they play a strange personage and divert from the Apostles.

But I might agree with them that the Apostles had been succeeded by many Bishops who did not always follow them plainly, such that there was a more than monstrous interruption that cannot remotely be recognized as a continuation and right following. They hold the Pope for universal bishop: is he conformed to the Apostolic lineage? It is no longer a question now that the Bishops were placed by the voice of the Clergy, and approbation of the people; as for the manner of making the Pope, there is nothing more vile and dishonest. How do they prove themselves to be successors of those whom Christ ordained to teach? Anciently the Prophet said to the Priests according to the order of Levi, to which the Law of God always granted the right to the office by reason of lineage and by heredity, "because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you."⁵⁵ In this same way, therefore, these inherited bastards of the Apostles, who are not their true children—this supposed brood—have rejected their charge to teach. Is it also needful to give their villainy a title of honor? After the people returned from Babylon, there was a semblance of priests' succession to Aaron, and this was an excuse toward the dignity and excellence of their state. But their boasting was well refuted by the other Prophet, saying that they had corrupted and falsified the alliance of Levi, because by them the people had turned away from the Law.⁵⁶ And here is kept the rule not only of the ancient Sacrifice, but also of the government which must be held today in the Church, that the eyes of the Priest keep knowledge, and that from his mouth one asks of the Law, even as if he is the messenger of the Lord of the Hosts.⁵⁷

Once more our good "Reformer" responds to us that he is the *Jurisconsult*.⁵⁸ By what right or what title is a brigand successor of those whose throat he has cut? Well, much worse is the condition of them, who for the purpose of putting the

Church under their domination, have not only cut the throats of men, but have cruelly destroyed poor souls, extinguished the doctrine of eternal salvation, transfigured Christ with an extreme shame, and by a vile falsity have ravaged or robbed the title appurtenant to others. And only when one does not mention any of this can they show the least shadow of some resemblance that allows one to conjecture that they are descendants of the Apostles. But if one steps away a little, one will see that Heliogabalus better resembles Camilla, than they do the Apostles.⁵⁹

I confess that in the books of the ancient authors, in discussion of the useful marks for installing good bishops, one finds that they put forward this succession of Apostles in opposition to the heretics who forged for themselves a new Gospel. But it is too much of an effrontery, when by force one wants to apply to these swine, these dogs and other vile beasts, an honorable title in our time, so that there would be purity in the Church. However, I do not reject all the words that escaped inadvertently from our good "Reformer," that the Roman Church is a member of the catholic Church,⁶⁰ seeing that he shows some sort of church in Rome in that he now states only that she is a member of the Church—yet he contradicts himself vilely by calling it a little later the Catholic Church, that is to say, universal.

Consequently after the preceding doctrine, he puts forth that no matter how much strange men may exert tyranny in the Roman Church, she is always the Church because she encompasses many places, and that in this is conserved the Word of God and the Sacraments. Now to the places, I agree that they are scattered and that there are some from one side or another. Nor do I deny as true what he claims Saint Augustine said,⁶¹ that there are many in the house of God that are not of the building, and also that the church has some enemies within. And as a matter of fact, he does not need at all to look very far for testimony of this certain thing. But why has he left that which was more to the purpose, and part of the

53. *Adultero-German Interim*, J. Calvin, *Calvin's Tracts, Containing Antidote to the Council of Trent*, Volume 3, ed. Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1851), 189–239.

54. Romans 15:16. See also Romans 11:13 "I magnify mine office."

55. Hosea 4:6.

56. See Malachi 2:1–9.

57. Malachi 2:7.

58. Calvin is referring to the author of the book he discusses, assuming he is Balduin, the celebrated jurist. In another letter, *Response de Jean Calvin aux Iniures de Fr. Balduin* (Response of Jean Calvin to Insults from Fr. Balduin), *Opuscules*, 2214, he states that Balduin had been granted the title "Jurisconsult," which is an expert in the law.

59. In Roman mythology, Camilla was a warrior virgin; Heliogabalus or Elagabalus, the decadent Roman emperor (c. 203–222), was neither.

60. Calvin here uses the small case "c" to distinguish from "Catholic."

61. Cf. *De Baptismo Contra Donatistas*, III, 13, 20. Migne, *PL* 43:167.

present matter, that there are many sheep outside? Of these he is quick to gather so that the visible Church would not be extended to sparse places. Yet in such a dispersion God is not concerned less with his own, just as Daniel was protected by an admirable privilege when he was absent from the assembly of the faithful. As for the doctrine and the Sacraments, I have shown a little before that he only gurgles as an impudent and annoying child.

Yet he is good to the Princes of Germany, whom he wanted to ridicule, but not letting himself abuse them so openly and vilely. He says that he cannot condemn those who were admonished by men of knowledge, that there are certain things in some places of the Church that have need for correction, provided that they are first authorized by those in sovereign power and have the common consent of this Church. He allows that they have reformed some points in the doctrine and manner of teaching, which shows that one can remove some number of the ceremonies, even some of the most ancient, as long as one can do this with as little scandal and trouble as one can. If one asks who these that he speaks of are, he puts them in the category of very good Princes, those at whose expense he was nourished without having merit. But, knowing of one of them in particular, I ask, in his wanting to reform the Churches of his country and put them in order: has he held his deliberation in suspense until the entire West had entrusted in him its consent and approbation? Has he waited upon the will of the Pope? Moreover, is it not a fine, evil, and malicious ruse, when he does not condemn these who have reformed doctrine, yet later, on the topic of ceremonies, he claims he would support them except for those who believe that certain ceremonies should be removed? It follows that if someone puts out a hand, he takes it for being guilty of temerity and seditious effort.

The discussion that follows no longer supports such fever dreams or frenetic reveries. "I am not able," says he, "to separate from Christ and his Church those who take part in these assemblies; who look for no other thing but the glory of Christ, and who study affection with all their heart to procure the peace and union of the Church, and who are attached to a place in charity with the rest of the body of the Church, even if they might differ in some things over diversity of opinions on the ceremonies." It must be said that it seems as if he were still at Heidelberg, because what other assemblies is he speaking

62. Matthew 25:25.

63. 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

64. Psalm 118:22.

65. Augustine, *Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homilies on the First Epistle of John and Soliloquies*, NPNF1 7:260: "You know now in the Lord's name who is the good Shepherd, and in what way good shepherds are His members, and therefore the Shepherd is one. You know who is the hireling we have to bear with; who the wolf, and the thieves, and the robbers we have to beware of...."

of when he says "these assemblies?" But if he would like to prove his reputation, he must not for the third time come to Geneva and there call himself a disciple of Calvin. But I leave this discussion, and ask him why he gave himself such pain to excuse those who live like private men in countries of the very illustrious Prince; also, how he exempts this Prince from condemnation and blame, who always publicly and overtly renounced the Papacy, and quieted others according to the legitimate power that he received from God?

But a little later, without changing the brush, he comes to darken those whom he had made white on the canvas. He cannot approve those who have wanted so much to remove themselves from the corruptions of the Roman Church that they would be free of it, and seem to be separated from all communion there. I do not ask at all what men he intends here, because one sees clearly enough that he holds us as schismatics. See how wrong he is, speaking against all reason, reproaching us in all that we do, in saying that we employ ourselves not as doctors, but rather, in this fashion, ruin and destroy. Yet an uncountable number of men, those who are not entirely incorrigible, show how much good medicine is found in our writings. Does one describe as destroyers and spoilers men who all their days deliver innumerable souls from the mouths of wolves? But this is another ruse: to charge a bad opinion against those he suspects have contradicted his treasons and disloyal machinations.

He says that we have no reason at all to remove the name of the Catholic Church from an assembly where evil men dominate and persecute those saints who admonished them. I confess what he adds consequently, that it is not necessary to attribute to the Church the bad that resides in false and disloyal governors. I acknowledge also his opinion that an unfaithful servant is sometimes established to govern in the house of God, according to what Christ teaches in his parable.⁶² I add to this, following the prophecy of Saint Paul, that the Antichrist is in the realm of the sanctuary of God.⁶³ In this manner, as for the ancient people, I agree not only with what he brings up, that Jerusalem had stoned the Prophets of God, but also that the Prelates and governors, named in the Psalm as master masons and builders, reproached the stone on which God willed that the Church would be founded.⁶⁴ If he insists only on this, that the vices of bad pastors cannot undo our duties to always love and maintain the unity of the Church, the discussion does nothing against us. We do not divide here, nor do we break it by any fashion of grief. It is not at all supported that the office of pastor must be of men entirely pure of all stain and imperfection. Similarly we teach that it is necessary to keep the rule that was held by Saint Augustine: to love and approve the good pastors, to bear the mercenaries, and to flee only the wolves, thieves, or brigands.⁶⁵

He therefore brings up the Anabaptists and other similar

types for their preaching that causes evil, which so embitters the most wicked of men that they come to the point of separating themselves from the communion of the Church; yet we only divorce ourselves from a manifest impiety of errors and detestable profanation of the service of God. But, says he, Zacharias, Simeon, Anna, Mary, and Joseph did not flee communion with the Church that was dominated by wolves. I confess that they had not at any point detested the sacrifices that God had commanded in the Law; and that they were also coming to the Temple consecrated by the Word of God for the purpose of rendering testimony to their religion, because the Law of the same God commanded it. Nor does he show us wrong by this example, if only there were the same condition and liberty in the papacy. But what sort of communion does this good "Reformer" invite us to, if not for the purpose that, in this stinking mess, we ourselves would mix with detestable idolatry and with an infinitude of sacrileges and superstitions?

This manner of deformity was widely removed from the saints. I will content myself by bringing up one example. Uriah the chief priest, in order to oblige the will of King Ahaz, built an altar resembling the one found in the city of Damascus and placed it in the Temple of God.⁶⁶ There is not at all a doubt that the offering of sacrifices there was an evil renunciation of God. And if one wants to believe our good "Reformer," to keep union in the Church, he would, in this fashion, cause us to be obliging men, using a disguise that would turn us from God and the faith.

Even so, he holds it to his advantage that Christ said to listen to the Scribes.⁶⁷ I confess that their doctrine was corrupted and that there was so much leaven mixed in it (of which, not without cause, Christ commands the disciples to beware of what they bring),⁶⁸ that they had annulled the commandments of God by their traditions. But did Christ permit the disciples to participate in such leaven and be infected by it? Did he want them to be subject to the traditions done by the will of men, seeing that he pronounces that it is vain to serve God in this way,⁶⁹ and confirms the prophecy of Isaiah, where he threatened to deploy a horrible vengeance on all the people who had served according to the commandments and doctrines of men?⁷⁰ Should our good "Reformer" take away from the Papacy this yoke of servitude, then we would be able in liberty of conscience to approach their assemblies.

It is good to note how maliciously he subtly and frivolously corrupts and twists the Words of the Lord. Christ, says he, warned his own to listen to those who were seated in the chair of Moses, that is to say, those who exercise sovereign authority and power according to determinations of Moses. Now see the surprise and conviction from an evil ignorance in attributing sovereign authority to the Scribes and Pharisees, many of whom were not of the Order of Priests, nor even of the same lineage. I ask you, where did Moses assign a seat in

the room for makers of sects? Moreover, what does our good "Reformer" intend by the phrase "to listen," unless to receive in obedience the doctrine proposed? Following this thinking, the disciples would have to obey errors against which Christ⁷¹ warned them to guard themselves. Now here is a crime of falsity that he cannot excuse under color of inadvertence, because he does not ignore the sense and sum of the words of Christ or take them in any other way except to suggest that these bad and wicked chiefs of the Scribes would never trim away at the doctrine of the Law, or that all children of God must recognize and revere this authority. Therefore, in place of Christ's intention to remedy a common sickness (namely, that those of the world judge the heavenly doctrines in light of the wickedness of those who expound it, and therefore they despise it all the more), our good "Reformer" wants, under these words, to cover and disguise all errors and all corruptions of doctrine. True, he seems in the end to justify himself from certain wrongdoing when he adds that it is necessary to obey them who make remonstrances following the contents of the Law. But this serves to whirl foolishly, seeing that at the start he said that errors of doctrine now found in the traditions must not prevent one from obeying them.

He comes again repeating the same song, absolving the Papiſts of the crime of revolt, because they are not themselves all turning away the Church; although they themselves are bastardized, having forsaken the purity of the doctrine that flows from the primitive Church.

Now he takes a fine stance for disguising things, saying that it is Christ who is the foundation and that it is necessary to have considered judgment in determining if one may find the Church in a particular company. If, on this foundation, those who came later build with wood, hay, and straw in the place of gold, silver, and precious stones, it does not nevertheless follow that they have left the foundation. These are his actual words. Will he extend this, therefore, to the idea that men who have totally destroyed and trample underfoot all Christ's virtue are founded in him?

So that the readers would better perceive the malice or the stupidity of our good "Reformer," there are two things to consider in Christ: to know his essence; and then his office and virtue. Being content with only one of the two, it is not at all difficult to annihilate the main thing, which is of greater consequence. Let Papiſts confess that Christ is God and man, and that his person consists of two natures. They

66. 2 Kings 16:11.

67. See Matthew 23:2-3 (citation added).

68. Matthew 16:6, 11.

69. Matthew 15:3.

70. Isaiah 29:13, see surrounding verses.

71. In the French, the pronoun "he" is used instead of "Christ," which was added for clarity.

reject quite distinctly and expressly all the errors by which the Church had been anciently tormented. They firmly and strongly anathematize Arius, Sabellius, Nestorius, Eutyches, Marcion, and the Manicheans. In this there is a strong agreement between us regarding the essence of the Divinity and of human nature, and the union of these. But if one comes to strip Christ of his grace, all this doctrine would be a meager thing without effect. His nature without grace would hardly profit the Church—there is nothing from which to build piety. In this way, therefore, when Saint Paul teaches that the Church is founded on Christ alone,⁷² he might be interpreted to say one thing, except that he sets it out elsewhere more clearly: namely, doctrines such as the fact that he is made to us by his Father wisdom, redemption, justification, and sanctification.⁷³ And here has he not rejected this wisdom, by which the example of Mohammed might be substituted in his place? This interferes with the work of the Master and by such inventions has stifled all the clarity of the Gospel.

Try as our good “Reformer” might, as a fair arbiter, to bring the redemption spoken of by Saint Paul into accord with the doctrine of the Papacy, is there anything more contrary to justification than saying we obtain Christ through the merits of works? Relying on these works, given that we are to search for our sanctification in Christ, how is it that there would be a concurrence of the will of man with the grace of the Holy Spirit, who alone comes to aid us? Besides, when one will come to the means and the form of this justification, it is very certain that the Papacy falls flat, unless Christ is to be our unique Priest and Advocate. The only sacrifice we hold is the eternal one of his unique death. Now to the contrary, in place of this, we find a great troop of advocates, these would-be pastors, boasting themselves to be doers of sacrifices. As for the Masses that are said every day, they make believe that these are sacrifices for purging and abolishing the sin of the world. Such a vile reversal of grace and virtue of Christ is yet another thing that piles up on the foundation of wood, hay, and straw. I do not deny that there may be true ministers of the Church who have yet obscured the pure doctrine by mixing it with their inventions. But the Papacy is quite another thing, where one retains so much the name of Christ; yet it is only a naked word without effect, because as for his office, which was the principal point in the matter of our salvation, there is not a single mention of it.

This insulter therefore carries himself off course to make a game of juggling, presenting to us in full force a vain and useless phantom in place of Christ. As for his comparison of error-filled contaminated doctrine to troubled water, it is as if a poisoner were speaking, saying that the strange color of a piece of meat or a beverage ought not warn us from eating

or drinking. Of the troubled water which he drinks, he prefers that it would fill the throat with silt and mire. But will he make believe that we would willingly drink wine originally drawn from a good barrel after he has corrupted it with mortal poison? Or that drinking water procured from a good source, yet if it is afterwards corrupted and made malodorous, is this not always harmful?

He goes on to say that one cannot excuse us from being found schismatics because we have voluntarily removed ourselves from the stinking pile of filth of the Papacy. He grants clearly enough that we are not heretics, seeing that he does not accuse us of any error. But he reproaches us for having made schism, as having broken the place of charity, because we do not esteem it proper to have communion with the Papists. I am not staggered if a man who is without human affection, who is only for himself, and who only looks to his own profit, babbles frivolously in passing of light charity. So it is that when we fail to direct all our studies to some end other than seeing that poor souls would be brought back to the hope of salvation, he senses that we have forgotten to recommend charity, so much that we must have caused breaks and violence.

But he replies that we despise the company that retains the ancient name of Catholic and of Roman Church, that we flee all communion with her, and that we have neither love nor compassion towards her as he would, despite the desecrations as found in the body of Satan and the Antichrist. Regarding the communion he desires, it is well enough responded that we would not flee communion with her but for her pollution by the idolatry and superstitions that envelop her. As for the men, in truth we are not at all their enemies, seeing that we are painfully and carefully concerned more with their salvation than of our own cleanness. But this mis-speaking that boasts that we have forgotten compassion, and also impudently and maliciously defames and blames us of cruelty for the course we follow in frankly detesting a disloyal feint, seeks to constrain us from discussing religion by the accusation that we hate and oppose the persons. We do not have communion with the Papists. Is it that we esteem them as swine or dogs, such that we must hate them? On the contrary, we have pity for their blindness. We seek to remedy their vices and to graft them to us. We love them with a fraternal affection. We do not at all make it hard to receive them among us, but are quite willing to have them, should they have the patience to purely invoke God with us. In short, we are ready to approach them, and we would join with them by all means, as long as they do not cause us to detour from Christ. We only flee communion with their idolatry, which can only harden them, pollute us, and envelop all those who assemble with us in condemnation and perdition.

Besides, for dazzling the eyes of simple men who are not skilled in these matters, he presses upon us the authority of

72. Ephesians 2:20.

73. 1 Corinthians 1:30.

Luther, who from the time that he only was yet beginning, and was as if learning the ABCs, decorated the court of Rome with the title of Church. We maintain that Luther had inadvertently spoken in this manner at the time, when through great pain he had tasted many small points of the pure doctrine. Is it not at least likely that this was a statement that escaped from him without thinking, since things of that time were all troubled and confused, before he could take it back and hold it tight to avoid prejudice to a good cause? It is as if he were a person who found himself surprised, recognizing in an instant all the monsters, and then progressing little by little by degree, in one moment reaching a point, and then another. But one can well see that this is a trick to turn one toward his fantasy that Luther⁷⁴ had written for another purpose, and in another sense. One can easily find that when Luther spoke of Rome, he often named it Babylon. We do not need to give much effort to debate a superfluous thing, seeing that everyone well knows that Luther, after practice and experience had confirmed it for him in better judgment, later detested all those who would not overtly and frankly depart from the impiety and sacrileges of the Papacy.

He later brings up the testimony of Calvin, who does not deny in response to Sadolet that those assemblies presided over by false bishops might still be Churches, even though he said that the Pope of Rome with all the troops of false bishops are ruffian wolves, etc.⁷⁵ But without remembering that Calvin said more on this in his Institutes, this same letter refutes sufficiently the malice of this falsehood. This one who recognizes in the Papacy the strange ruins of the Church, does he attribute something to the beasts who give themselves the title of Bishop? But that author similarly defends himself enough from this calumny in clear enough terms. Because after having made a recitation of certain species of error that go against the principles of faith, he says,

I will not allow, Sadolet, the placing of such enormity under the title 'name of the Church.' You defame the Church against all right and reason and render us odious toward those who are badly informed of such things, as if we had resolved to make war against the Church. Because we still would confess that formerly there had been some beginnings of superstitions put forth—namely, little deviations from the purity of the Gospel—you always make as if these monsters of impiety that we war against were not born long ago, or at least had not come to be so strongly believed and to have acquired grandeur.

Finally, after having uncovered the villainy of the Papacy, he states:

And still might you make a case for your obedience and humility, that the reverence you have for the Church restrains your hand from hunting and exterminating all these enormities? How is it that a Christian man can have communion with this feigned obedience and double disloyalty, which gives liberty to misstate the Word of God and to accommodate it humbly to the vanity of men? Similarly, can he have communion with this rebellious and opinionated humility, which reduces and disdains the majesty of God, for the admiration and reverence of men alone?

Now, in the beginning of this passage, Calvin, in order to search deeper and to expose the false covering of the title "Church," which those careless men held for hire by the Pope use to try to dazzle the eyes of the world, had made a good discourse. And when our good "Reformer" hides this discourse, he hardly does so honestly, seeing that at other times he has recited the whole letter by heart. Thus, as if in a single word, he demonstrates such malignity here, in cutting the discussion and alleging half of it, so that he can later pull it back by the hair. Because this is how Calvin speaks of it to Sadolet:

In great force you will present this to me as the Church, which furiously persecutes all the determinations of our religion, to which we are bound by what was written to the saints, the oracles, and books of Scripture; and since recorded also in the books of the Holy Fathers and fixed by the ancient councils. In short, for defining what the Church is, it is said that it is the company and communion of all the saints, who are spread throughout the world, and who speak in all ages, always being aligned in the sole doctrine of Christ and in the Spirit, nourished and held united in faith and brotherly concord.

That which follows are discussions so enveloped in tortuous circles that you will say that he sprays his breath with noise and snorts, as was always his custom in laughter. He says that he embraces and reveres as properly the Church all those assemblies that he finds whole, healthy, and in accord with the doctrine of the Gospel and with Apostolic tradition. He includes here equally one or the other part of the Church: namely, those who retain the ancient name of Catholic and the others who have a newly invented name, the Evangelicals. Now, what else is Apostolic tradition, if we were to hold it as fixed, unless it be an opinion received from antiquity? In

74. The French reads "the author," of course referring to Luther.

75. Referring to Calvin's 1539 reply to Cardinal Jacob Sadolet, John Calvin, "Reply by John Calvin to Cardinal Sadolet's Letter," in *Tracts Relating to the Reformation*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1864), 1.25.

this manner, error, whatever it may be, may reside in surety, armed by an indubitable certitude, and being covered by the shadows of antiquity. He says that he recognizes such a church for a true Church because she holds to the foundation of the true and Apostolic doctrine and does not separate from the communion of other churches, thereby making an evil schism. And what he thinks of our Churches he demonstrates by the string of his discussion, comparing us to Syrians, Ethiopians, and Armenians. Why therefore does he pronounce previously that he must hold us to be schismatics? Who cannot see that he plays against himself in presenting us as phantoms?

As for what he claims not to judge: the idea that if there is diversity of some ceremonies and questions, it is sufficient to say that there is a mere division among the churches, and this is tolerable, provided that the communion is maintained in Christ, who is the Chief, and in unfeigned charity. This would be well said if, as if coming from above, he did not build for us a Christ of all sorts of pieces and varied colors: namely, composed in part by bastardized inventions and in part by the doctrine of the Gospel. For what is shown here is that one might use them to oppose serving the name of Christ. He then says that it is still held foremost in the Papacy, where it is vilely torn up and dismembered, being by force separated and ripped from his Gospel, and his truth disfigured in a horrible and deformed fashion.

Still in this place he plays. If (granting that he is a serious man) he above all hates the name-calling of sects and factions, and believes that when these people call the others Papiſts, Antichriſts, miniſters of Satan, and adversaries of the doctrine of Christ, they are going to hell; yet, on the contrary, he calls the others heretics, schismatics, apoſtates, and enemies of the Church of Christ, why is it that name-callers who are no less odious in their use of language in a different discussion, whom he thinks it is fine to call Anticatholics and Calvinists, are later called by him companions in the school of Religion? He would wish in this changeable inconsistency, exposing himself, at least to have disposed of his old master.

Well now it is necessary for us to see what we need to be faithful Christians, if we acquiesce to his judgment. Regarding his judgment that these do not well who introduce a neutral sect under the claim of keeping themselves from being too affected by one party or another, I willingly agree. And for my part, I do not find it good for one to be attached to one party or another with such an excessive affection that he is

prevented from having an equitable liberty and right to judge well. He seems to speak well here, yet he reverses it shortly after. Because now he insists as strongly and firmly as before, that the foundation of religion resides in the Papacy, and that the faithful can commune in such an assembly. But from what countenance does he dare affirm that the Papacy was founded in Christ, seeing that in it, all his glory and virtue are made low and vilely thrown to the ground? How can one believe that religion subsists there, when it engages in a mortal battle against the doctrine of the Prophets and the Apostles? And then he states that, in it, the heresies are well condemned—how is it that he separates from the Papacy the farcically infinite pile of falsehoods and evil doctrines?

But he will say that there is no other remedy when Religion is caught between two wrongs. Our good “Reformer” therefore is so much in the middle that by a secret ruse he forges a neutral manner of Religion. The true Religion is as much among the Papiſts as among us. He always says that the one and the other are stained by many errors. Does he hold that where doctrine has been lost on one side or the other, one may sew them back together so that the pieces fit, and thereby come up with a new church composed of two diverse parts? This is a marvelously color-changing theology, now applied to those called the “catholics,”⁷⁶ these with whom he wills we would be in communion. Is this what is necessary to make the faithful among the Papiſts desire to serve God and not be called schismatics? Of course, our “Reformer” notes, there are in the Papacy men who make the Pope of Rome a quasi-god. And these lift his authority, not only above all the Church, but also above Scripture. Now if one has a conscience to separate himself voluntarily from such men, how can it be a vile and evil treason to reside away from such a sacrilegious assembly?

Besides, until he has shown the corruptions and errors of our doctrine, there will be no reason to receive his fantasy that religion is caught between two wrongs, as any man of good judgment would agree. And returning to what he had first said, that he does not approve at all a neutral sect, he has forgotten himself, going back on his word, by putting forth this third manner of men with whom he claims to keep company. Here I would agree with his opinion: if he can prove that the doctrine of piety is not found among us, one would have to look for it in the middle. But seeing that he does not show at all how we are deviating from the pure and simple rules of the right faith, not in a single small point, is there nothing less reasonable than to praise only those who disagree with us as much as with the Papiſts? As if this were a sufficient testimony for right judgment and holy moderation. It is quite true that by this method it would be necessary to hold as resolved that those who remain neutral, calling themselves, under a false label, Nicodemites,⁷⁷ are the only wise ones, holding the right way, so that they can avoid all debate

76. “catholics” with a small ‘c.’

77. A term apparently first introduced by Calvin in his *Excuse à messieurs les Nicodemites, Recueil des Opuscules*, 789–803, English translation by Eric Kayayan, “Apology of John Calvin, to Messrs. the Nicodemites upon the Complaint That They Make of His Too Great Rigour (1544),” *Calvin Theological Journal* 29 (1994): 346–63. It denotes a secret or timid adherent.

with us, despite us having been drawn into it in making frank profession of our faith.

When I look closely at what he claims in his book, from one end to the other, I find it seems to be that while things everywhere are troubled, badly situated, and all of France is in pandemonium, his only aim was to play himself as a serious and weighty man, so that, in giving some hope to pacification, he can insinuate himself into the good graces of those whom he thought would have the inclination to float between two waters and make common agreement. Also, at first he had referred to times past, because he had been a runner who often changed his religion and had left his post to run to the side of the adversaries, thinking that by this admission he might erase any blame of his light disloyalty. It appears as a fine excuse when he says that he always carries himself with the same affection toward one as to the other camp, saying that he has not withdrawn from supporting the unity of the Catholic Church with us, as well as with the Papists. He claims always to want to turn away hot prejudice that worked to his disadvantage, so that where he resided would not cause suspicion among those from whom he sought favor.

Yet for certain from the beginning he had aimed his poison arrows at one point, which was his target: namely, to divide the harmony in which the faithful assemble, in order to break the course of the Gospel. In fact, he was himself of the opinion that he had not badly advanced his cause when in the first days he was received amiably. He had thought his foolish hope for great reward was so near that it seemed to be within his hands. On seeing himself frustrated since, he sings pitifully, lamenting the sad story of what he had come to. Accordingly, he did not fear to draw into his fantasies those who sought to follow the right way in good simplicity. See here, this is the trap, and this is what makes bad his heart. Here is why he says that unless the counsel of the Nicodemites is followed, it will be impossible to have peace in the realm or to see agreement. Yet this is insupportable. This vile calumniator, by misrepresentation and false blaming, oppresses the good servants of Christ, who do not want to purchase peace at the expense of religion. As for our adversaries, what he says about them is very true: that in feigning an appearance to desire peace, they want nothing but our death and ruin. But in what he says of us, I take his proper conscience as witness, unless he is wickedly and vilely lying. It is not remarkable that, for the glory of God, we would desire the tyranny of the Papacy be removed, which is such an enemy against the salvation of men. Because if this tyranny yet resides in his presence, neither religion, nor the service of God, nor the reign of Christ can be restored and reestablished whole. But see that by our efforts we seek to gain the salvation of those who are our very cruel enemies. It is a great wrong for one to reproach us in such things that are

so very far from all our acts and enterprises: namely, that we desire their ruin and that there would not be a way to make peace in this oppression.

As for the comparison he makes to civil wars, without question this has a place in such a discussion. We do not make the war against persons, but against them who are formal enemies of the Church, who reverse entirely the piety and knowledge of God, with whom at all times we are always ready to be reconciled so that the truth may reside safely in its entirety, for in this is contained the glory of God and the health of the Church. We never look to ourselves, but instead would attribute the glory of the victory to God, and the fruit to all the body of the faithful. But the good "Reformer" ordains for us a very foolish method of pacification: namely, that from one side or another, we will leave and will let go of things, that we not make ourselves unhappy over our condition, neither the one nor the other, as if it were in our power to conform the prerogative of God to our pleasure in compromise with each other by common conditions.

When men plead among themselves about their borders; or debate about preeminence or honor; or over a difference over some amount of silver; or other worldly affair, it is necessary to give heed to the warning of Christ: that we should liberally seek peace. But as for our combat, we are not permitted any other end, and we are not to look for another goal, but that one and the other can join hands in carrying a common agreement according to the judgment of Christ.

God reserves to himself alone the sovereign empire over souls. One has taken him away; we demand that he be brought back. He placed in his Word the sum of true piety and religion, and there is found the view of eternal salvation. Now the doctrine of the Law, Prophets, and the Gospel has been vilely corrupted by strange speculations, numerous errors, and monstrous dreams. We demand that the doctrine be put back into its first luster. This cannot be done by itself unless all the inventions of men that oppose the holy and heavenly oracles are brought down. The Temple of God, in which the sanctity must be inviolable, has been villainously profaned. We demand that it be cleaned. And who is this among all men, who dares to bring us all back together, rebutting so little that it would be the law of God that must remain inviolable? "It is a lovely name, this name of Peace," says Saint Hilary, "and very pleasant is the opinion of union. But who is it who doubts that the only peace that properly unites the Church and the Gospel is the peace that is in Christ?"⁷⁸

78. Hilary's letter to the Emperor against the Arians, circa 364, *Contra Arianos vel Auxentium*, Migne, PL 10, 609c. "Speciosum quidem nomen est pacis, et pulchra est opinio unitas: sed quis ambigat eam solam Ecclesiae atque Evangeliorum unitatem pacem esse, quae Christi est!" It also is quoted by Calvin in his "True Method of Reforming the Church," *Calvin's Tracts, Containing Antidote to the Council of Trent*, trans. Henry Beveridge, 3.240.

This holy person⁷⁹ calls upon the peace of Christ, which so connects the faithful with each other that it holds them fixed under the head, which also is founded in a Holy consent and simplicity, so much that they invoke with one heart, and as if by one mouth, God as their Father. In short, the pure doctrine of the Gospel is a bond, the unique guardian of our salvation, and not one stripped of the truth of God to be made a mortal division between God and us. All those who are of courage, those who would rather die a hundred times than be placed in an unhappy position to trim away from the sum of the whole of the doctrine of faith, would be truly proper and sufficient men to appease the debates.

He also no less maliciously tries to render our cause suspect, saying that we are looking for favor from the great and the powerful—of whom, if these who undertook to follow the doctrine of piety had depended, they would not only have trembled, but having been completely weakened by powerful menaces, cruel edicts, and mortal efforts, would have nothing left in reserve. And when today there might be favorable conditions among the great of the world, how much gain can come to them in return? There is nothing therefore more foolish than his objection to a thing from which they are so far removed, as the claim of seeking riches, good things, honors, or other grandeur.

Besides, our good “Reformer” still opposes here, saying it is enough to practice the exercise of piety in the things on which we agree in one part and another. Concerning faith in Christ’s death and resurrection, and of loving God and the rest, he says there is no difference; that in these two points consist all the sum of piety.

Chatterbox!⁸⁰ Are they here to put their faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, the virtue and fruit of which they have partially annihilated by their forthright determinations and their claimed merits? Who, by the satisfactions they have invented in their place, stifle the free remission of sin, saying that purging is done every day by their sacrifices? Who, in taking upon themselves the role of intercessors and advocates in one place or another, keep Christ hidden from the assembly? And then you were constrained to recognize your spite—that

regarding the exercise of piety as obedience to the commandments of God, are we not in great difference on this point also, when for our part we hold to one sole Lawgiver, we acquiesce to his Law, and the adversaries do nothing but present to us in full force the inventions and determinations of men?

I freely confess that what you consequently add is true, that the Disciples of Christ did not make subtle questions of things high and did not plumb the profound mysteries and hidden things, provided that under this appearance of simplicity, venom is not hidden in trickery. Now, as this fashion permits only men who let slip the bridle to find subtlety, such as those you tax us with, which are as much wrong as malicious, are you not disguised as a fox that insinuates itself to guard the chickens?

And well I agree with you that simplicity is the virtue that holds the first place among the children of God. But does it seem to you that they strive over frivolous things, when they debate strongly and firmly that in our nature there would be nothing that is not spoiled or corrupted, until it has been regenerated by the Spirit of God making us alive in justification? Do you hold that it would be a vain speculation, saying that our intentions would be blind, until they would be illuminated by heavenly grace? That our hearts are perverse and bent upon rebellion, until they would be reformed in obedience to justice? In short, that we are slaves to Satan, until the Son of God delivers us from this miserable tyranny? Is it a worthless curiosity to inquire how souls can with tranquility rest in firm assurance of salvation? Is it a subtle question to treat upon the truth and right invocation of God? Are they obscure enigmas in teaching how God must be served, whether it is according to the rule of his Law or according to the inventions of men? Is it combat over a thing not valiant to speak of, when we work to put Baptism back into its purity, removing the vile filth and strange profanations that have been put upon it? And likewise, when we work to completely abolish the Holy Communion so that it may be reestablished in its proper wholeness, putting down and extinguishing the detestable sacrilege of the Mass, which is farcically composed of an infinite number of impious monstrosities? I stop myself from listing all the items, because it is sufficient to have touched a little on the words that I have just recited, so that the readers can sense the main tone of impudence.

The sentence of Irenaeus merits noting: “That it would be better to not know the cause of each thing, and to not seek knowledge except in Jesus Christ, to avoid falling into impiety by subtle questions and much language.”⁸¹ This also conforms well to Saint Hilary, who says that “faith is in simplicity, and in the faith is justice, and that God does not call us to the good life by difficult questions; that Eternity is proposed to us by an easy and facile means, if we believe that Christ is resurrected from the dead, and confess that he is Lord.”⁸²

79. Calvin refers, of course, to Hilary.

80. “Bavard” in the French—one who talks incessantly about foolish things; a prattler.

81. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book II, Chapter 26, paragraph 1, ANF 1:397.

82. Calvin refers to Hilary from *On the Trinity*. “In simplicity then is faith, in faith righteousness, and in confession true godliness. For God does not call us to the blessed life through arduous investigations. He does not tempt us with the varied arts of rhetoric. The way to eternity is plain and easy; believe that Jesus was raised from the dead by God and confess that He is the Lord.” Book 10, section 70. NPNF2 9:202.

A more modern translation follows: “Hence, faith is in simplicity,

But having made such statements, do they both not throw themselves against all errors with as much vehemence as they can? Consider Irenaeus, what labyrinths he was compelled to untangle in order to guarantee the purity of the faith against monstrous trickeries? As for Saint Hilary, how much did he give of himself in taking great pains to refute the cavils of the Arians? When they engaged in such combat, are we to say that they were forgetting the sobriety that they were obligated to follow? All to the contrary, it is in this fashion that they show themselves truly sober, when they cannot suffer at all a break or diminishment of the doctrine received in the Word of God.

True, it seems our master "Reformer's" example is not without the appearance of reason, when he calls for moderation in treating the matter of Predestination. And in fact, it is good to look long at this, that we do not twist ourselves with shocking questions. But he shows at the end of his discussion that his vile misspeaking is regarding another thing. Because though they are not necessarily odious or suspect, there might be subtlety in confessing that there are some questions stirred up by curious men that cannot be discussed calmly, unless given the same care as given by knowledgeable and faithful persons. He can always tax obliquely those who hold themselves to maintain the free election of God. It is certain that in disguising his calumnies against the doctrine that we show to be the source of our salvation, and that is the unique foundation of faith and holy humility, he makes an effort to run it back into hiding. I freely confess that it is always the secret judgment of God by which he predestined some to salvation and others to perdition, and that this has been subject to evil blasphemies among men without religion, and that this point of doctrine has been discussed at the wrong time or in the wrong way here and there by questions not only superfluous, but also pernicious, when the profane do not at all undertake the difficulty of sounding the profound depths of the counsel of God because of their folly and blind temerity. It is therefore necessary to bridle the wiggling lightness of men so that they do not hunger to know more than what is permitted.

There is also a studied ignorance that is quite laudable, when we want to know nothing in religion except what is revealed by the Word of God; and for things that God has willed to be hidden from us, we would content ourselves to hold these things in reverent admiration. But it is not to say that it breaks the rules of sobriety, when by good prudence, one opposes the baying of hunting dogs⁸³ by snubbing them with quick reason, because often by their importunities they seek to constrain men. And note also how Saint Augustine admonished Valentinus and the others,⁸⁴ so that the obscurity of this question might not trouble them, in advising to follow the counsel of Saint Paul, that we have all like sentiment, and that if we sense something otherwise, we should wait until the day of revelation. Not to bury at all the doctrine, or counsel to

lose it, or to flee from it, but quite the contrary, after having brought the readers in all gentleness to this point, he desired to render a docile spirit as he unraveled frankly and virtuously the mysteries that appear to cause fear in men who are badly informed of things.

Besides, I would suffer easily our man to discourse in common places, as one says, and in general remonstrances, and to make his complaints of bad remedies suitable to bad findings, if only I did not see that in walking through these tortuous circles, not only does he throw his blows against good men who have no punishable fault, but also he tries to cause anger with his venom for the purpose of infecting the hearts of those who are badly informed of things, and for slowing the course of the Gospel, putting obstacles before it with secrets and hiding. I would say that we see a covered mouth when he makes his lamentations over the pitiable example in the Kingdom of France, except that he overtly exposes his perverse malignity, when there is nothing that annoys him more than the happy advancement of the reign of Christ. Yet he is not wrong in saying that blaming him of lightness and timidity makes him odious, because having been for such a time something like an apostle, he merits no more credit than a dog and an enemy of the cross of Christ, which he so much flees that he may, if he can, search by all means to live in delicious and comfortable ease.

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justice is in faith, and piety is in the confession. God does not call us to the blessed life by means of difficult questions, nor does He lure us on by the various categories of oratorical eloquence. Eternal happiness is obtained completely and easily by believing that God raised Jesus from the dead by confessing that He Himself is the Lord." Saint Hilary of Poitiers, *The Trinity*, trans. Stephen McKenna, *The Fathers Of The Church: A New Translation (Patristic Series)*, Vol. 25 (CUA Press, 1954), 456.

83. "Faboy des chiens."

84. *Letters of Augustine*, Letter 214, to Valentinus, NPNF1 5:437–38.