

Preface
to the books on the Supreme Pontiff

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Before we approach the disputation on the Supreme Pontiff, I believe I must preface a few words. In the first place, on the utility and magnitude of the institution which is in dispute: thereupon, concerning those who attack the Roman Primacy in books, or even on the other side, those who fight in its defense; that they have been zealous from the beginning of the Church even to our times, and at length, on the reason and order, in which we should treat and also explicate the present Controversy, which is necessarily going to be long.

For indeed, the magnitude of the question on the Pope, and also its utility is chiefly understood from two things: on the magnitude of the matter on which it is treated, and in like manner is called into doubt, and from the multitude and vigorous opposition of our adversaries. Furthermore, what exactly is treated on, when we treat on the primacy of the Pope? I will say briefly, we are dealing with the chief issue of Christian faith. Moreover, it is asked, should the Church exist any longer, or should it be dissolved and destroyed? For, what, is it to ask, whether one ought to remove the foundation from the building, the shepherd from the flock, the general from the army, the sun from the stars, the head from the body, except to ask whether one should destroy the building, disperse the flock, empty out the army, darken the stars or kill the body?

Next our adversaries, that is, the heretics, since they generally disagree with themselves on doctrine no less than with us, nevertheless all agree on this, that, with supreme opposition of their spirit, that they should oppose the seat of the Roman Pontiff with their whole strength. There have never been any enemies of Christ and also his Church, who did not wage war together with this seat. It seems to me that the Prophet Isaiah foresaw and predicted

these two things long ago. Indeed, the magnitude and the utility of the matter, when he said: “*Behold, I place in the foundations of Sion, a stone, a stone that is proved, the corner stone, precious, a foundation in the foundation.*”¹ Secondly, he foresaw the attack and opposition of the heretics, when he says of this stone: “*It is the Stone of offense, and the rock of scandal.*”² Although the latter citation from Isaiah is not contained in the same place as the former, (the latter are chapter 8, the former contained in 28), nevertheless, the Apostle Paul in chapter 9 to the Romans, and the Apostle Peter in his first epistle, chapter 2, join all these words of the prophet together, so that no one can be in doubt, whether they refer to the same end in the same manner: and although we are not ignorant that these words particularly agree on Christ, nevertheless we reckon the same words hardly fit the vicar of Christ.

Therefore, what are the foundations of Sion? The Apostle John explains this in the Apocalypse: describing indeed all the parts of this same holy city, and also its decor, he says among the other things: “*And the wall of the city, having twelve foundations, and in them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*”³ The foundations of Sion, therefore, are the Apostles counted among them, and a certain stone excels the rest: “*Behold,*” he says, “*I place a stone in the foundations of Sion.*” What this stone may be, no one can be ignorant who reads the Gospel. Since, in point of fact, one of the twelve apostles was named Simon, and his name was changed by the Lord, who willed, that he should be called Peter in place of Simon, I say a rock. Accordingly in the Aramaic language, which our Lord most certainly used, this is none other than *Cephas*, that is *Petra*, or to be better accommodated to us Latins, *Petrus*, or you are *rock*, and on this rock I will build my Church. Behold the stone in the foundation of Sion. But of what sort do you reckon this stone? *The stone*, he says, *that has been proved, the corner stone, precious, established in the foundation.* The proven stone: accordingly this rock is tested by every kind

¹ “Ecce ego ponam in fundamentis Sion lapidem, lapidem probatum, angularem, pretiosum, in fundamento fundatum.” Isaiah XXVIII: 16.

² “Lapidem offensionis, et petram scandali esse dicit.” Isaiah VIII: 14.

³ “Et murus civitatis habens fundamenta duodecim, et in ipsis duodecim nomina duodecim apostolorum Agni.” Apocalypse XXI: 14.

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of proof, for all the gates of hell attack her.

And, while I will omit the persecutions of the Jews and also of the Heathen, which were common both to this seat and with the rest of the Church: it must be noted in the first place, that all the heretics make war upon this seat, not just once, nor twice, but repeatedly and always with renewed armies. Thereupon the rivalry and pride of the Greeks has not yet ceased to wage war on this seat, whose religion with its dignity they have lost since being oppressed by the Turkish emperor. Then the most powerful Christian emperors, and what is more under the name of religion and piety, have tried to overturn and overthrow this seat, from whence they even obtained the scepter of the Roman Empire.

Moreover, you are not ignorant of the tragedies in the Church which Henry IV, Henry V, Otho IV, and above all, Frederick II, and several others stirred up at different times. And, as if this were a little matter, Satan has stirred up the Roman People to rise up against Popes. The very serious epistle of Blessed Bernard to the Senate and the Roman People is still extant, in which he tried to calm their sedition against Pope Eugene which was counseled by the devil. However, very turbulent and pernicious seditions of this sort, whose aim was to destroy the Roman Pontiff, have endured not for days, nor months, but years, nay more even centuries.

At the present very serious schisms have come about, and many of them in themselves over the Roman Pontiff, in which they could not cease in any way, and at length labored even to destroy the see of Peter, as if it were not the strongest and most proven rock, established by God as the foundation of Sion, who himself said: "*Even the gates of hell will not prevail against it.*" Moreover, in the event that we might reckon that this seat has stood for so long on account of the incorrupt life, and the untouched morals of the supreme pontiffs, we find that God permitted that certain popes who could scarcely be called good should at some time hold and reign in this seat. Rightly, such were Stephan VI, Leo V, Christopher I, Sergius III, John XII, and not a few others, if the things that we read about their lives and deeds in the writings of the historians of those times are true.

Therefore such accounts that the heretics labor to collect on the vices of certain pontiffs ultimately comes to nothing. Truly, we recognize and affirm, that their vices were not few: rather the glory of this seat was merely distant, obscured or diminished in their vices, in order that it could be more forcefully

increased and magnified by the same. Here we understand, that the Roman Pontificate has existed for so long not by human counsel, prudence, or strength, but because this rock was so fortified by the Lord, divinely founded, surrounded by guards of angels, by a unique providence of God, and fortified by his protection, that the gates of hell should not be able to prevail against it by any means, whether by “those gates” is meant the persecution of tyrants, or the madness of heretics, the fury of schismatics, or sins and outrages. The proven stone, therefore, God placed in the foundation of Sion: not only proven, but even the corner stone, a stone which connects two walls. This seems to me to prove the distinction that was placed between the pontiff of Christians and of the Jews. The latter, was indeed a foundation stone, but not a corner stone: nor indeed did it hold up two walls, but merely one. Rather, our stone is the corner stone; for both Jews and the Nations, joined together as though two walls, and also making one Christian Church, are contained from this one corner stone.

Isaiah adds, “*even Precious.*” In one word, a treasure is meant, such that is derived most copiously in every Church from the see of Peter and in the greatest abundance. Indeed, from what place were the missionaries sent to Germany, France, England and other far away lands, that they might preach the gospel, except from this seat? Where did bishops, being cast out from their sees throughout the whole world, seek refuge, as the famous Athanasius, and Peter of Alexandria, Paul, and Chrysostom of Constantinople, where did they discover help and refuge, except in this see? From where do we have the explication of dogmas, the rites of the sacraments, the communication of indulgences, except from this see?

Wherefore, that I should pass over the rest, which would take a very long time to enumerate, where is the consensus in doctrine, the bond of peace, the unity of Faith, where is the very salvation and life of religion, unless it is from this seat? Otherwise, why is it that the heretics of our time, when they have sufficiently obtained many and even great lands, England, Scotland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Poland, Bohemia and not a small part of Hungary, have not yet been able to compel one general Council that they all might agree on one point of doctrine? Why even the Greeks since the year 800, in which they cut themselves off from the see of Peter and the Roman Church, for almost 800 years have not ever celebrated a Synod to argue mutually among themselves for agreement and peace? When we, on the other hand, have had

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around ten general Councils, and at that very frequently, the last of which was in this time, in which the Lutherans among themselves bitterly contended, and publicly despaired of the unity and the supreme agreement of the celebrated fathers. What can be the reason for such a difference, except that all of them lack a leader and ruler, who alone can and ought to confirm all the brethren in Faith, and retain the whole Church in unity?

At length the prophet adds: “*It has been founded in the foundation.*” What, indeed, is founded in the foundation, except a foundation after the principle foundation, that is a secondary foundation, not the first? Accordingly, the first and particular foundation of the Church we know to be Christ, about which the Apostle said: “*No man can place another foundation, apart from that which has been placed, which is Christ Jesus.*” But after Christ, the foundation is Peter, and unless it is through Peter, one does not reach unto Christ. Although the heretics talk about Christ, and boast that they follow his word and doctrine, nevertheless it is unavoidable that, as Leo the great says, one is exiled from the divine mystery, who will have dared to recede from solidity of Peter.

The seat of Peter, therefore, is the proven stone, the corner stone, the precious stone, founded in the foundation, and it is indeed so for us: but on the other hand, to our adversaries the heretics it is nothing other than the stone of offense, and the stone of shame. Although they ought to build themselves upon it into a holy temple in the Lord, instead these, like truly blind and insane men, dash themselves against it. It goes against human wisdom, against their pride, for those who in their own eyes are experienced, that one mortal, in whom there is no erudition, nor goodness, nor any other reason they should judge themselves inferior to him, should be called the foundation of the Church, above which, a building, at the same time vast, sublime, and an immense has been placed. For this reason it displeases them, because they do not understand, what may be not only easy for God, but even glorious to choose from the weak, that he might confound the strong. Nor do they seem to have noticed, that this is God’s way, that through Faith, and humility he leads to wisdom and glory.

Thus it is certain without a doubt, that through the foolishness of preaching a Crucified Man believers are saved: thus he chose fishermen, that he might convert emperors: thus in abject and common things, water, oil, bread and the species of wine, he bound the strength of the sacraments, and the endless treasures of heavenly gifts: that while we are subjected to abject

things by humility and faith, we are carried to the lot of the sons of God, and to the consort of the very divine nature. Nevertheless, the heretics close their eyes to all these things, and do not cease to fury and revel against the salutary rock, and against the counsel of God, that it should be to them the stone of offense and the rock of scandal. Indeed the Donatists named this seat the chair of pestilence: Berengarius called the pontiff of this seat the *pompificem* and *pulpificem*⁴: the Waldenses ‘the whore clothed in purple’; Wycliff called it the synagogue of Satan; the Lutherans, Calvinists, Anabaptists contend it is the seat of Antichrist. And although they might disagree with us on many other matters, nevertheless from this cause alone have they wished to impose upon us a name. They call us nothing other than Papists, as if only, or particularly, they reckon we err in defending the supreme pontiff. And they do not reckon themselves to be able to give someone any greater insult, than if they might call him a Pope. Moreover, on the other hand every place found to be filthy and sordid, and whatsoever is found to be foul and ugly in the nature of things, they begin to call in some fashion dealing with the term “Pope”.

Therefore, this is the spirit of Luther and Calvin and the like against the Pope, that although they indeed write sharply and petulantly on all other matters, when it comes to the Supreme Pontiff, they do so violently, by loading on insults, calumnies, jeers, that he is driven by mad spirits, and is filled with a wicked demon, or rather that he has lain aside human nature, and clothed himself with a demonic one. Besides, even if they should they wish to establish a leader, (naturally they refuse), they are weak and useless, but the supreme pontificate is the firmest rock, not them, for while they strike at this seat, that they should try to break it, instead they shall be broken by it: “*Who soever will have fallen*” the Lord said, “*upon this stone, will be broken, upon whom this stone should fall, it will break him.*”⁵ And Pope Leo the Great declared: “*Whoever thinks it wise to deny the first place to this seat, truly in no way can he decrease its dignity, but being puffed up with the spirit of his pride, he shall sink himself*

⁴ These are a Latin play on words for the word Pontifex (bishop or Pope), meaning “ostentatious Bishop” or “Fleshy Bishop”, roughly. They have no equivalents in English.
- Translators note.

⁵ Qui ceciderit super lapidem hunc, congringetur, super quem vero lapis ceciderit, conteret eum.” -Matthew XXI: 44.

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into hell.”⁶

As some vast boulder, which stands out in the midst of the sea above the waves and tides, is never thrown down nor moved, although again and again the blowing of the winds and the waves of the sea rush upon it with great force, but instead all these dissipated and broke: in like fashion the seat of Peter struck so many times already, by the Jews, the heathen, heretics, rebels, and schismatics with incredible fury, nearly all of these were either consumed or conquered, or made prostrate, for over 1500 years she has stood immovable: and always (as St. Augustine said) while heretics howled around, it obtained the summit of authority. Since these things are so, unless I am mistaken, you will see the magnitude of this controversy we have proposed to explain.

I come now to it, which we have placed in the second point. The first ones who attacked the primacy of the Roman Pontiff in earnest appear to have been the Greeks. Truly, already then in the year of our Lord 381, they wished that the bishop of Constantinople, who as yet was not even a patriarch, should be set before the Eastern Patriarchs, and be maid second to the Roman Pontiff. This can be seen in the second Ecumenical Council, can. 5. Thereafter in the year 451, the Greeks, not being content with the matter, tried to make the bishop of Constantinople equal to the Roman Pontiff. For, in the Council of Chalcedon, act. 16, the Greek Fathers defined, although, not without fraud, since the roman legates were absent, that the bishopric of Constantinople ought to be so close to the Roman See, that still it should have equal privileges. Not content with this, in the times of St. Gregory, and of his predecessor Pelagius II, around the year 600, they began to call the Bishop of Constantinople “Ecumenical”, that is, or the whole world, or universal bishop. The witness of this affair is St. Gregory himself in letters, many of which he wrote on this subject in a short time to John the bishop of Constantinople, to the Emperor Maurice, to the Empress Constance, and to the rest of the patriarchs of the East.

Thereupon in the year 1054, they openly pronounced that the Bishop of Rome had lost his position on account of the addition of the phrase *Filioque* to the Nicene-Constantinoplan Creed, based on a judgment from the Council of Ephesus which had forbidden it, and further pronounced the Bishop of

⁶ Loc. Cit.

Constantinople to be the first of all the bishops.⁷ There is even a little book extent in Greek written by Nilus the archbishop of Thessalonica against the primacy of the Roman Pontiff, which recently Illyricus brought into the light from unknown darkness, and translated into Latin.

On the side of the Latins, the first were the Waldenses, who removed themselves from obedience to the Roman Pontiff. The Waldensians arose in the year 1170, as Reynerius writes, and they flourished for 300 years. Thereupon in the year 1300, from the witness of Matthew Palmerio in his Chronicle, there existed those were called the *Fraticelli*, who apart from other errors, held this, that the authority of Peter had long since ceased in the Roman Church, and was transferred to their sect.⁸ Not long after, in the time of John de Turrecremata who witnesses it, Marsilius Paduanus arose, and John of Janduno, who held that not only are all bishops equal to the Roman Pontiff, but even all priests.

Thereupon, around the year of our Lord 1390, arose Jon Wycliff, and John Huss followed him, whose opinions against the Apostolic See can be read in the Council of Constance, sess. 8, and 15.

At length in our century Martin Luther, and so many heretics appeared after him, who tried to undermine the Roman Pontificate with all their strength and every effort of their spirit. And the summation of their doctrine is, the Roman Bishop was at some time shepherd and preacher of the Roman Church, and one from the rest, not one above the rest: but now is nothing other than Antichrist. See Luther in his book *de potestate Papae*, et in *assert*, art. 25. Cf. Philip Melanchthon (if he is indeed the author of the book) in *de potestate et primatu papae*, or *de regno Antichristi nomine* written in the name of the Smalchaldric Council. John Calvin in bk 4 of the Institutes, chapter 6, and the rest. John of Brennon in *Confessione Wirtemb.* Chapter on the Supreme Pontiff, and in *the Prolegomena against Peter of Soto*. Matthew Illyricum in *Cent.* 1, lib. 2, cap. 7, col. 524, et sequ. And ch. 10, col. 558, and thereupon in individual centuries, chapter 7. For the same author, in the book on the primacy of the Pope, and in another *de hist. Concert. Papae* and *Concilii VI*

⁷ See also Sigebert in his *Chronicle*, and it is gathered otherwise from the epistles of Pope Leo IX.

⁸ See John de Turrecremata, lib. 4 Eccles. P. 2, cap. 37.

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Carthaginens.

For a while now, those who wrote on behalf of the authority of the Supreme Pontiff, are found in all nations: but lest by chance, someone might find himself passed over, I will not avail myself to enumerate them all, but merely those whose works I could get my hands on. From Poland, we have one, which is like unto many others, obviously that of Cardinal Hosius, in his works *in explicatione Symboli*, ch. 26, and in book 2 *Contra Brentium*, and in his book *de auctoritate Summi Pontificis*.

From France we have two books: Remundum Ruffum in his book *adver. Carol. Molin. Pro sum pontif.* and Robert Arboricensis in 1. *Tom. De utriusque glad. potest.*

From Germany we have John of Eck in three books *de prim. S. Petri*; John Faber *in refutat. Lib. Luth. de pontif. potest.* John Cochlaeus *in 4 Philippica*; Gaspar Schatzger *in Controvers.* Conrad Clingium *lib. 3 de loc. comm.*

From Lower Germany six: John Drieden *lib 4, ch. 3, pg. 2, de Scriptura et dogmata Ecclesiae.* Alber Pighius *bk 3, 4, and 5, Eccles. hier.* John of Louvain *de perpet. Cath. Petri protect. Et firmit.* John Latomus in his book *de primatu Petri*; William Lindanus in his book *Panopliae*; John of Burgundy *in compendio Concert. tit. 31.*

From England six: Thomas Waldens in book 2 *doctrinalis Fid.* Art 1 and 3. John Roffenson *in refut arctic* 25. Cardinal Reginald Pole in his book *de sum. Pontif.* and book 1 and 2 *to king Henry VIII.* Aalan Copum *Dialogo* 1. Nicolaus Sanders in his book *de visib. monarch.* Thomas Stapleton in book 6 *Controvers.*

From Spain seven: John de Turrecremata book 2 *de Eccles.* Alphonse de Castro book 12 *contra haer.* Melchior Cano *bk 6 de locis Theologicis*; Peter of Soto *in defens. Suae confess.* Ch. 74 even to the end. Francis Horantius, bk 6, *de locis Cathol.* Francis of Toledo in *lib. contra Anthony Sadeelem.* And Gregory of Valentia who recently even wrote on the same argument in his *Analysi Fid. Cathol.* Par. 7 and 8.

From Italy 8: St. Thomas *in Opusc. cont. Graec.*; Blessed Augustine *Triumphum Anconitanum*, in sum. *De potest. Papae*; St. Anthony 3. Part. Tit. 22, sum. Theol. Thomas Cajetan *de Instit. et auctor. rom. pontif.* Thomas Compegio in a book of the same title; John Anthony Delphinus bk 1 and 2 *de Ecclesia.*

From Greece one: Gennadius Scholarium *in defensione cap. 5.*

Now, however, for what pertains to the order and disposition of the

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proposed disputation. It contains two particular parts: one on the institution of the supreme Pontificate, that is the Ecclesiastical Monarchy, the other on the office and power of the Supreme Pontiff. And in the first part six questions are contained.

First: Whether Monarchy might be the best form of government?

Second: Whether the rule of the Church should be through monarchy?

Third: Was St. Peter the first spiritual monarch of the Catholic Church?

Fourth: Whether the same Blessed Peter came [to Rome], and also established the same pontifical see to remain perpetually?

Fifth: Whether the Bishop of Rome succeeds St. Peter, not only in the Roman Episcopate, but even in the primacy of the whole Church? Wherein, with respect to this question, certain other aspects [of the Papacy] are also recalled, which when they are joined together, cannot be separated from it in any respect; such as, hearing the appeals from the whole world; on establishing, confirming, transferring, punishing and even from the duty of removing bishops, and several other attributes of this sort.

Sixth: Whether the same Roman Bishop could at some time have gone from being the vicar of Christ to being Antichrist?

The second part of the Controversy embraces six questions.

First: Should the Roman Pontiff make decisions on controversies of Faith and Morals?

Second: Whether he can err in that judgment?

Thirdly: Can the Supreme Pontiff make laws, which bind the consciences of men, and at the same time, punish those who break them?

Fourthly: Whether Ecclesiastical jurisdiction was so consigned to the supreme pontiff alone by Christ, that it is derived to the rest of the Church only through him?

Fifthly: Whether apart from spiritual jurisdiction the same Pope might have some temporal power, on account of the fact that he is Pope?

Sixthly: Whether he can have, and in the very matter does have, the rule by donation, of some temporal empire in certain provinces or regions?