Circumstances Under Which Obedience Is to Be Rendered to Prelates

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Reformed · Late Medieval · Treatise

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INTRODUCTION

Written from prison in 1412 while its author awaited the summons that would end at the stake in Constance, this treatise dismantles the claim that ecclesiastical superiors must be obeyed absolutely, distinguishing lawful authority from the wickedness that so often wears its robes. Hus works verse by verse through the Scriptures his opponents cited against him, exposing how selective quotation had been used to silence correction of prelates. The argument here fed directly into the Reformation a century later, and Luther would acknowledge his debt. Expect close, combative exegesis — a man reasoning for his life against the doctors who would condemn him.

Now as to the authorities which the doctors have adduced to emphasize the necessity of human obedience, the following is briefly to be said. For, in the first place, they say: "The Roman church and prelates are to be obeyed by inferiors in all things, according to the Saviour's statement, 'All things whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe,'" Matt. 23 : 2.1 Here I wonder why the doctors openly cut off the Saviour's previous words, for they do not quote: "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat." Nor did they add the later words, "Do not ye according to their works," but they only quote the intervening words: "All things whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe." Here it seems to me that they have so done because the pope and other prelates of the church do not wish to be compared with scribes and Pharisees, and if anything is said of their evil works they are indignant; and because also the doctors and masters are flattered by such things, and so the former heap up to themselves masters having itching ears who turn away from the truth and the masters are flattered. Therefore, the apostle's prophecy is fulfilled in both particulars, for he adjures Timothy saying: "I charge thee in the sight of God and Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season;

reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine, but having itching ears they will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts and will turn away their ears from the truth and turn aside unto fables," II Tim. 4 : 1-4. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that prelates gratefully accept the statements of the aforesaid doctors, for they anoint all those statements with the oil of flattery and do not lay down a single word of correction

with intent to suppress their wickedness. But a Master, a Bishop, and most just Judge will come, who will think most righteously of the flattering speaking of the doctors and the wickedness of the prelates, even he who said: "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, all things, therefore, whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe, but do not according to their works, for they say and do not."

Truly this Master never spoke fair of the wickedness of prelates and doctors. He spoke the truth, taught his own faithful ones and confuted the scribes, sitting in Moses' seat, because of their evil works. He spoke truth and taught truth, for he sat in Moses' seat, that is, the authority of judging and teaching God's law, as has been shown above, Chapter XVIII.

By that authority Moses said: "They come unto me, that I may judge between them and show them the statutes of God and his law," Ex. 18 : 16. "All things, therefore, whatsoever they bid you," that is, pertaining to the seat of judgment, "do," namely, from the heart, "and observe, " namely, in deed. "But do not according to their works," that is, keep their doctrine, do not follow their life: "for they say and do not." Chrysostom says: "They preach the faith and act in unbelief, give to others peace and do not have it themselves, cry out the truth and love a lie, denounce avarice and love covetousness." Augustine, as above, on Ex. 18, says: "Sitting in Moses' seat, they teach God's law;

thereforc, God teaches through them, but, if they wish to teach their own things, do not hear them, do not do them."

Therefore, most true is Christ's saying and command, by which it is clear that he does not command the keeping and doing of all the precepts of those who sit in Moses' seat, for otherwise he would not have said: "They lay heavy burdens and grievous to be borne," and consequently burdens which ought not to be borne. And in the next chapter it is seen how he excused his disciples in respect to eating with unwashen hands and fasting.

Then, as for the authority of Augustine (which the doctors immediately append), the chapter preceding this, near the end, gives his statement. As for the statement of St. Jerome, on the explanation of faith, see Chapter XVI, where is set forth what he had spoken to Pope Damasus. But, after having looked at many old books, we have found that he wrote to St. Augustine, whom in his letters he often calls pope — which Augustine was a true pope — giving one significance to Peter's seat and Peter's faith, as appears near the beginning of Chapter XIII. As to St. Bernard, when he speaks of the absolutely good and the absolutely evil, and things intermediate, Chapter XIX treats of that. And it is added : "In these things which are intermediate the law of obedience is placed as — tanquam — in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which was in the midst of Paradise." Certainly, in these things to prescribe our view to the judgment of the Masters is not right; and in these things neither the command nor the prohibition of prelates is in all cases to be despised. Here it is to be observed that the adverb of similitude, "as" [as it were] — tanquam — expresses a certain amount of likeness, not full likeness. For in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil the law was placed by God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. This law was given under pain of mortal sin. For God said unto Adam: "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and, evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day thou eatest of it, thou shalt surely die," Gen. 2 : 18. Here, then, three things are to be thought of — he who gives the word of command, the command and the condition of the person called upon to obey. He who commanded is God, who cannot err; the

command is exceedingly useful; and man it is who heard God himself commanding. To eat, therefore, of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil after the prohibitive command was given, was an absolute evil. In accordance with this, let us suppose that the prelate Peter command John, his inferior, to collect strawberries and let it be thought that it is not possible for him who commands to err in this, and let it be thought of how much value such a work is for the person called upon to obey, and also that the man called upon to obey is disposed to do such a work, as was Adam to do God's command, and it is evident that in all these three, the comparison is not the same. For a prelate may err and the work commanded is not so useful, and the man called upon to obey is not so disposed to do that work, as was Adam to do the command of God.

Therefore, Bernard says that a work which is intermediate is one which in respect of mode, time, or person may be either good or bad; and here that saint insists upon the circumstances from the side of him who gives the command, from the side of the work, and from the side of him called to obey. Therefore, when he says that it is a work which is intermediate so far as the mode goes, he urges a due measure of the exercise of reason, in such a way that he who commands does not depart from the divine counsels. For, if a prelate should command Peter, a subject, a learned priest in God's law, to feed sows on the Lord's day and God for that day should counsel him to do for Him a work of supererogation incompatible with that act of feeding, then Peter the priest is bound to obey God who counsels rather than the prelate who commands. This is clear, for in this case the superior is more to be reverenced, one whom every subject is more bound to obey; and the enjoined act also is more useful. But the act enjoined by the prelate, namely to feed sows on the Lord's day, is in respect to merit a thing indifferent, but the act enjoined by God has of and in itself the reason of merit.

Hence, I could wish that he might reply to St. Bernard in respect to this case. If St. Benedict had bid him feed sows for himself and, for the same time, God had given him a counsel to give advice to persons asking in the church with respect to the salvation of their souls, I am of the opinion that the authority of him who counsels and the greater usefulness of the counsel, as compared with the commands of St. Benedict, would have forced Bernard to hearken rather to the divine counsel than to Benedict's command, both to the honor of God and to the salvation of those asking counsel. From this it is seen to follow, that we owe more to any divine counsel whatever than to a human command which is incompatible with it. Secondly, it is seen to follow that no one is bound to obey a private command except in so far as it admonishes in accordance with the divine counsel or command; and it is clear that, as regards the mode, a due measure of reason is involved and also the quality of the command, both of which he who is called upon to obey and he who commands ought to consider. For what reason would there be for the command of a dull and fat bishop that a priest should feed sows and send away Christ's sheep without pasturing them — sheep which Christ purchased with his own blood?

Similarly must the circumstance of place be thought of, for, if a prelate should bid a subject to appear in a place where enemies are who are planning the subject's death, the subject is not bound to obey. Hence Pope Clement V, de Sent. et rejud. in Clement. [Friedberg, 2 : 1152], says: "Who would dare or by what reason would any one be held bound to dare to submit to the judgment of such a consistory — namely, to place oneself in the bosom of enemies and to offer oneself voluntarily to a death from violent injury and not by formal justice? That, indeed, is to be feared from the side of the law; that is to

be evaded as a matter of morals; that human sense and reason flee from; that nature abhors. Therefore, he would be a fool who would dream of such a citation binding the one cited." Nor ought the means of defence to be taken away which come from the law of nature, for the emperor himself has no right to withdraw those things which are provided by the law of nature.

Likewise, Pope Nicolas wrote to the emperor Michael, 3 : 5 [Friedberg, 1 : 518]: "That suspects and enemies ought not to be judges, reason itself dictates, and it is proved by many examples. For what could any one give more acceptable and to be desired to an enemy than to commit a person to him to be assailed, who might greatly wish to hurt him?" This thing also the Constantinopolitan synod, Canon 6 [381 A. D.], is known to prohibit, and in the very same chapter [Friedberg, 1 : 518] Pope Gelasius a most brave assailer of heretics, says: "I ask for the tribunal to which they lay claim. Where can they carry their cases? Before those who are enemies and at the same time witnesses and judges? But to such a tribunal no human business should be committed. And if to a tribunal, where enemies are the judges, no human business should be carried, how much less ought cases of divine import, that is, ecclesiastical cases be carried! He that is wise, let him understand. And in truth, for this reason, the good emperor Justinian is known to have promulgated in his laws the same, when he said: 'He who thinks a judge partial may, before the trial begins, accuse him that the case may revert to another. For it is just as natural to shun the assaults of judges as to wish to flee from the sentence of enemies.' Thus St. John the Golden-mouthed refused to enter the college of the council assembled together against him." These things are found at the place [Friedberg, i : 519] where Gratian draws the following conclusion:1 "Outside the limits of his province no man charged with guilt is under any circumstances to be summoned." Hence Pope Fabian,2 3 : 6 [Friedberg, 1 : 519], says: "The case is always tried there where the offence occurred, and he who does not prove his accusation should himself suffer the punishment he would inflict." Likewise Pope Stephen,3 3 : 6 [Friedberg, 1 : 519]: "No permission to accuse shall be proceeded with outside of the bounds of the provinces, but every charge is to be heard within the province." The same thing appears, 3 : 6 [Friedberg, 1 : 523] from the action of the Roman synod.

Therefore, what would be the nature of such obedience, or what reason would there be for it, that a person cited three hundred miles away — to the pope unknown, accused by enemies — should go with such concern to himself through enemies and come to hostile judges and witnesses and consume extravagantly the goods of the poor or (not practising extravagance) that he should go, suffering with hunger and with thirst! And what would be the fruit of such an appearance? Certainly the neglect of the work enjoined of God, so far as his own salvation goes and the salvation of others. Nor will he there be taught how to believe well, but how to push litigation, which is not permitted to a servant of God. There he will be despoiled in the consistory [curia], he will grow cold in holy morals, he will be stirred up through oppression to impatience of spirit, and, if he have nothing to give, he will be condemned, even if he have justice on his side. And what is more serious, he will be compelled to adore with bended knees the pope as God.

Blessed, therefore, be God, who says: "I will go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry which is come unto me, and if not, I will know," Gen. 18 : 21. "Blessed be the Son of God, who came down from heaven to seek and to save that which was lost," Luke 19 : 10. "And he went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them because they were distressed and scattered as sheep not having a shepherd," Matt. 9 : 35-36. Blessed be Christ who commanded Peter, saying: "If thy brother sin against thee, show him his fault between thee and him alone," Matt. 18 : 15. Therefore,

the pope will not find any passages except such as prove the contrary, namely, that Christ answered in person citations of this kind. For, if popes would depend upon that law of Christ as stated, Matt. 7 : 12, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them; for this is the law and the prophets," I am of the opinion that they would not with reason desire to cite men and oblige them to make such a perilous and untried journey. Therefore, why do they urge others without a patent and reasonable cause to go to such pains and labor?

Oh that they would think of an exemplary life lived as set forth according to the authority of the pontiff, Christ, who piously went to see the erring and those oppressed by the devil, not by citing them to appear, not by excommunicating them, nor by imprisoning them, or by burning them — and who charged Peter and in him every one of his vicars, saying: "if thy brother sin against thee, go show him his fault," etc. Here Peter's vicar should take note, first, that when he wants to show a brother his fault, he ought to see first that he himself is unblamable, for love ought to begin with itself. How, then, may a prelate, full through and through with simoniacal heresy, pride, self-indulgence or avarice, lawfully show a brother his faults? To him the Lord says: "Hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye," Luke 6 : 42. Or how may he condemn any one to death, when the Saviour says: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," John 8 : 7. In truth, if that law of Christ be thought of, rarely would a prelate be found in these times who could lawfully correct or condemn for heretical depravity.

Secondly, Christ's vicar should note how the Saviour commands, saying, "Go," for here he commands that judges ought in telling subjects of their faults to visit the places where the offence is said to have been committed, as even law proclaims. For so did Christ and all his apostles. And so Christ will do at the last judgment, as he alone predicts in Matt. 25. In the third place, let Peter's vicar or prelate note how in the way of telling one's fault, he ought to be prudent, diligent, and intent that he do not excommunicate before the close of the third rebuke. Fourthly, he should note the number of the faithful witnesses by whom the brother's offence is to be established. And fifthly, he ought to tell it to the church, as one greater than himself, for so the Lord bade Peter: "Tell it to the church."

From the things already said I summarize: that the proposed excommunication does not concern me or bind me because hostile judges and witnesses dwell in Rome and the case chiefly is a matter touching the judge. The distance for me is a long one and, guarded as it is all along the way by hostile Germans, I do not see any fruit of my appearance, but, on the contrary, only neglect of the people in the Word of God. I hope that Christ will guard me, as he said: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, be ye, therefore, wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and in their synagogues they will scourge you," Matt. 10 : 16, 17. He also said: "Behold, I have told you beforehand. If, therefore, they shall say unto you, behold, he is in the wilderness, go not forth: behold, he is in the inner chambers, believe it not," Matt. 24 : 25, 26. Therefore, I have committed myself to Christ alone that whether as a result of the false excommunication of men, or, outside that, by natural death or through violence he may bring my life to a close.

Then in respect to the circumstance of time [as bearing upon the duty of obedience], it is not doubtful that it is necessary for the one who gives a command as well as for the one called upon to obey to

know when an act good generically, or when a neutral act, ought to be performed. For, if during the paschal festival a prelate bids a subject fast or, if he has a healthy body, on Good Friday not to fast, would it be lawful for a subject to obey contrary to the custom approved in the church and contrary to the conscience of this subject which resists, or, if he should bid him wander in the middle of the night through woods among cruel wild beasts when there was no necessity for it? And many are the commandments of this kind repugnant to reason. Nor should an argument be made in favor of obedience, if it were anywhere found in the lives of the Fathers, that subjects in the case of works which are without fitness or neutral obeyed, even as certain of the holy Fathers did obey, as Hugo of St. Victor, Libellum Intitulatum, speaking of these things which may not lawfully be done, said: "Just as we read that certain of the holy Fathers commanded subjects many things foreign to human reason that they might teach them the virtue of obedience, such as watering dry parts until they produced seeds or softening hard stones by pouring water over them and taming ferocious beasts by a word of command."

So far as the circumstance of the person is concerned, it is clear that here reason ought to direct as to a work good generically and also neutral. In a work generically good, if the prelate should command the subject to give alms by pauperizing his boys, or to take up penance by fasting which he is not capable of enduring, or to make many prayers even as confessors lay hard tasks upon men — certainly in such cases a pope is not to be hearkened to, since a parent is more bound to nourish his boys than to give alms to others; and he is not bound to bear insufferable burdens. The same is true in works neutral, for, if ever a pope should command me to play on the flute, build towers, to mend or weave garments, and to stuff sausages, ought not my reason to judge that the pope was foolish in so commanding? Why should I not prefer in this matter my common sense to the pope's sentence? Yea, if with all our doctors he should command me do these things, the reason would judge that the sentence of these persons was foolish.

Likewise, if the pope of his own motion should command that any one accept a bishopric who was incompetent on account of his inexperience of the language of the people he was to rule, would he have to obey by accepting? It is evident he would not. Similarly, it is evident that the people would not have to accept him just as they would not want the pope to put over them a shepherd of sows or goats — a pastor who would be of no account to feed those flocks.

And it is clear, that Christ's faithful disciple ought to look back to the first exemplar, Christ himself, and listen to a prelate as far as he teaches Christ's law, things reasonable, things to edification, and things lawful for the subject, for Cyprian, God's glorious martyr, says: Decretum, Dist. 8 [Friedberg, i : 15]: "If Christ alone is to be hearkened to, then we ought not to listen to what any one before us may have thought ought to be done, but what Christ, who is before all, did." This soundest of rules antichrist's satraps lay aside, who say that disobedience to papal statutes is to be punished most severely, and so Christ with his law is put aside. Hence, it being laid down that obedience is due to the pope and prelates in all things neutral, the pope, in treating the law of Christ as difficult to understand, may decree that no Christian should do any work that is neutral, except such works as he himself approves and ratifies, and consequently he may ordain that his satraps cite any persons whatsoever to appear and answer at his tribunal; and so they are able to worry the people out till they make a promise, and mulct the people as they do in absolutions, in reservations and in dispensations.

And, as is believed, they would practise this more abundantly if they did not fear that the people, perceiving their subtilty, would rebel. For now God is enlightening the people that they be not beguiled from Christ's paths. For Daniel prophesied, saying: "And arms [forces] shall stand on his part; and they shall profane the sanctuary and they shall set up the abomination that maketh for desolation, and such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he pervert by flatteries, but the people that know their God shall be strong and do exploits," Daniel 11 : 31-32. Antichrist's "arms which stand and profane God's sanctuary" are wicked prelates who are an abomination on account of their villainies, and they are the "desolation" by refusing to imitate Christ. Of this abomination Christ says, "when ye see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet," Matt. 24 : 15, and, "standing where he ought not," Mark 13 : 14. And when the prophet adds, "and such as do wickedly against the covenant," for they say they keep Christ's covenant, but will not keep it, because they obscure and gloss it for their own exaltation and to excuse their sin, "but the people that know their God," that is, know by the gift of God's grace, will obtain Christ by imitation of him and will do the commandments of the covenant of the Lord Jesus Christ. But because to those that teach these things persecution comes unto death, therefore Daniel further says: "And they that are wise among the people shall instruct many and shall fall by the sword and in the flames and in the captivity and by the fall of days. And when these shall fall, they shall be lifted up by the help of the little ones and many shall join themselves unto them with flatteries," Dan. 11 : 33-34.

The experience of the facts enables us to understand this text, for simple laymen and priests, taught by God's grace, teach very many by the example of a good life and, gainsaying publicly antichrist's lying words, perish with the sword. This is seen in the cases of the laymen, John, Martin, and Stafcon,1 who resisted antichrist's lying disciples, and perished together by the sword. And others, exposing their necks for the truth have been martyred, being seized, imprisoned, and murdered and yet did not deny Christ's truth — priests, and also laymen and women. But those who have oppressed them have gone away clandestinely for, terrified by antichrist's censures and seizures, they have turned into the opposite way. But God, up to this time, multiplies the sons of his church who suffer and are patient and publish the truth of Christ's law. Therefore, blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has hidden the way of truth from the wise and prudent and revealed it unto simple laymen and little priests who choose rather to obey God than men, who in acts generically good and acts neutral have the life of Christ before their eyes and obey prelates so far as these acts, modified by circumstances, can be reasonably put into practice for edification through the imitation of Christ. For they themselves hold that an act, in order to be virtuous, must be justified by eight circumstances, which are set forth in this line:

Who, what, where, how much, how many, why, in what manner, when.

Who, that is, the individual who ought to obey. What, namely, he ought to do when he is commanded. Where, because in one place it is fitting, in the case of an act good generically or neutral to obey, and not so in another place or in any place whatsoever. How much, namely, he ought to obey, in as far as the command is of something applicable to edification according to the counsel of Jesus Christ or his command. For one is not bound to obey forever his personal superior as the foolish prate, saying, that the pope's and secured, as he thought, their immunity from death. But after he was once out of sight,

the men were taken from prison and quickly beheaded. A great crowd coming together gathered up the bodies and carried them amidst the singing of sacred hymns to Bethlehem chapel, where they were buried and Iooked upon as martyrs. In one of his sermons, Langsdorff, p. 16, Huss refers to the death of these three men as a price for denying that the pope is the God of this world and can forgive sins as he will, and to their burial in Bethlehem.

authority extends to the right of infinite commanding, and whom individual Christians ought to obey even to that extent. How many, namely, acts he may lawfully do, since it matters not whether the subject, following the command of a priest binding him to penance, gives two pennies or two denarii or fasts three days weekly; and that he give as many pennies or fast as many days as the simple fellow commands or limits (unless he £11 his confessor's purse), or that he give as much for the building of St. Peter as he would offer if he lived there and as much by the estimate of the pope's camera as he might consume on the journey thither; and so of other taxations invented of the devil. The faithful ought also to think of the circumstance of the end in view, namely : why, that is, with what end in view he ought to obey by the act which is enjoined, because, if it leads to God's honor and directly to the profit of the church, then it is a good end. But if another end is held forth, then it is against the apostle's words: "Whatsoever ye do, do in the name of Jesus Christ." For the end determines all the means — media — which are used with that end in view. Hence, Aristotle concludes, de Anima, 2, with these words: "It is right that all things should be called good by the end, so that when the end is good, the means for that end are also good." And another circumstance is also added, when it is said: how. For it is not enough to do a thing that is good generically, but it is demanded that it be done well, for nothing can be done well by a man except as he abides in love. Therefore, the apostle says: "Let all your things be done in love." And that nothing is well done by a man without love, the apostle proves when he says: "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing," I Cor. 13 : 3. And this is reasonable because the branch cannot bear fruit, except it abide in the vine, as the Saviour said: "Ye cannot bear fruit, except ye abide in me," that is, by love, John 15 : 4. Hence it is said in a general way that a certain philosopher, by name Phantasma — Illusion — advanced that God is the rewarder not of nouns but adverbs [not names, but qualities], and it is clear that for obedience to be true, grace or love is needed. Then other circumstances are involved in this adverb, how, because one that is called upon to obey ought to perform the work commanded out of love, in humility, wisely, joyfully, bravely, and promptly. The last condition is when — namely, it is fitting to perform the work commanded, as has been said before, with respect to time, for without doubt there are many acts good generically and also acts neutral, which it is not expedient to command at any time whatever, and consequently it is not expedient to yield obedience to them at any time.

However, as for this [namely, that the inferior obey the superior in all things], it is argued up to this point thus: Suppose that the pope should, by the bond of holy obedience and upon the assurance of obtaining absolution from penalty and guilt or some other spiritual benefit, bind every cleric subject to him to resist the first pope obedient in all things, and that he should bind every laic by a similar formula to resist the first disobedient pope and let the injunction be made under the severest of anathemas — and suppose in addition that every cleric or laic subject to our pope was first obedient to him and that every cleric resisted every laic and vice versa. Here the contradiction would be manifest because it

is allowed that Peter the cleric and Paul the laic were not at first in opposition, resisting one another, and I ask whether Peter being for the moment obedient is resisting the pope. If so, then we must say that for that moment Paul was disobedient to the pope because, inasmuch as he resists Peter who is disobedient to the pope in all things, and it was enjoined that he should resist the first disobedient pope, it follows that Paul incurs the mark of disobedience, and so also Peter for the moment being disobedient would be resisting the pope. Then we should grant that Paul is obedient and Peter also, because before they resisted one another they were both obedient, and Peter by resisting, was not disobedient but, as follows from what has been said, his obedience is confirmed. And it is not valid to deny the pertinency of this case on account of the following things, namely, (1) because only what was neutral or possible was commanded and (2) because a prelate may command what in itself is impossible and altogether unreasonable, therefore, he may command that thing, and so there remains no reply except the truth that neither more nor less on account of his commanding do the cleric and the layman incur reward or penalty. For a command must be reasonable with God if it is to be obeyed. And then it would hold good, provided no one under human authority would make that command, since otherwise a man would become disobedient to reason. And it is clear that, as in the case supposed, there would be no possibility left of looking for remission or anathema, so in a general way there would not be in the case of a papal sentence except so far as one merited them in accordance with God's will. This logical objection must be solved. And similarly suppose, that Peter the prior had a second Twelve made up of conventuals all obedient to him, and he should bid the more stable Twelve not to speak with the other unless perchance by being disobedient it might bring the other to obedience. And it is clear that the second Twelve did not talk with the rest except, by obeying Peter, to bring the other to obedience, and Paul of the former Twelve should speak with Linus of the latter Twelve both of them excelling in this that they have regard to the injunction of obedience, so that, before the talking occurred, both were lawfully obedient to Peter; and the contradiction will appear.

ing a remedy against the spots of his bride, and Paul contradicts the idea that it is wanting, Gal. 5, for he resisted Peter, the pope, to his face for a light offence and also in his writing left for those who were to come after, that in cases of like falling away they should do the same to their brother. Therefore, it is faithless to assert that the higher rank may not have its fault told it in matters moral by an inferior. Wherefore, in case of a fault, a son may lawfully tell his father his fault, a daughter the mother, a subject the prelate, a disciple his teacher — all following the rule of love.

However, against these things the objection is made that the pope has the place of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth. But it is not permitted any one to tell him his fault, as appears from Matt. 16. When, on account of Christ's rebuke, Peter is called Satan, is it not, therefore, permitted to find fault with him that occupies Peter's stead? But this kind of reasoning includes too much, for it would necessitate saying that every vicar of Christ is impeccable, just as Christ is impeccable. But it is a good inference that neither pope nor other person ought to be found fault with or corrected in so far as they follow the Head, Christ. But, if a bishop or confessor occupying Christ's stead attempt an act of selfindulgence with a virgin or a chaste wife, ought he not to be vehemently found fault with as if he were antichrist and the faithless enemy of his own soul ? For in committing such an illicit act, he does not occupy Christ's stead, but the place of antichrist himself and the devil, tempting a woman most iniquitously. And it is clear, that that statement of St. Bernard which the doctors adduce, namely, that in those things, that is, ' things intermediate, it is certainly not right to prefer our view to the sentence of the masters, and in these neither the command nor the prohibition of prelates are altogether to be spurned ' — the circumstances must be understood fitted to the act of obedience which is owed in respect to the mode, place, time and person, as has been said. For often the student with reason refuses to obey in an act intermediate or neutral or even in an act good generically, showing the reason why it is not expedient in such a case to obey. This has frequently happened to me, when I have commanded; and being taught better and even taking gratefully information, I have obeyed the student. And the same reasoning holds in respect to a prelate, for in our times prelates often talk wildly in their commands because of ignorance, and are to be reasoned with in love, by their subjects, for the well-being of the church.

But it is objected to this that an equal has no rule over an equal. Since, therefore, the pope excels every other pilgrim and every superior his subject, it seems that it is not the business of any pilgrim to correct the pope or any subject his prelate. This means that, if the antecedent be denied, since necessarily God the Father has no rule over the Holy Spirit, and yet they are equal persons, the consequence does not follow, namely, that of necessity God the Father has rule over the Son, according to the humanity he assumed and yet necessarily they are absolutely equal. Therefore, if no equal has rule over an equal, the catholic faith is gainsaid. And again: as is the rule of a vicar, so also of the same kind is all human rule, as the apostle says: "Charge them that are rich in this present world that they be not high-minded," I Tim. 6. But such rule is either independent, derived from itself, or it is originally authorized over some creature, and so it is clear how bare this mode of reasoning is both as to its substance and form, for he understands by this principle that an equal has no authoritative rule over his equal, on the ground by which he is equal to one who rules in such a way. But what stands in the way of one who excels in virtue telling to one inferior in his living his fault, howbeit the latter be the superior in rank ?

Besides, the objection is raised from the canon law, Dist. 21, Nunc autem [Friedberg, i : 71], where it is declared that no one of the holy bishops dared to bring a judgment against Pope Marcellinus, but they said: "By thine own mouth judge thy case. Thou shalt not subject thyself to our decision. " That is to say, that this saying of the bishops is not sufficient to nullify God's law according to which in the case of Paul he reproved Peter the pope. Secondly, it means that it would be most superfluous for them to reprove him in such a case, who observed from his contrition that he was fully reproved of the Lord. Thirdly, it means that he was sufficiently reproved by them when they said, "by thine own mouth

judge thy case, thou shalt not be subject to our decision." And still again, it means, Be not heard at our tribunal but gather up thy case in thy own bosom and once more thou wilt be declared righteous of thyself, they say, or be condemned out of thine own mouth. Certainly that was a great act of reproving, because those who reproved cast the duty of reproving back on the pope himself. Hence Marcellinus, when he heard these things, declared the sentence of deposition against himself.

Thus it is clear that a subject following the rule of prudence and of love may correct an erring superior and lead him back to the way of truth. For, if a superior should wander away and come into a cave of thieves or into the danger of death, it would be proper for the subject to draw him back and to preserve him from danger. Therefore, this is the more allowable when a superior by a devious path of living runs into the cave of demons and into the peril of the worst death of sins. If, therefore, in the first case, the superior would rejoice, why not much more in the second? If he employs a guardian in the first case, why not in the second ?

Nor is there anything to conflict in that saying of St. Augustine, de conflictu virtutum et vitiorum [Migne, 40 : 1094] :l "What sort of men they ought to be who rule is not a question to be discussed by subjects." This is true and evident, that they ought not to discuss rashly what sort of men they ought to be, nevertheless, reason dictates to them that they who rule ought to be good, that they ought not to live in excess and, if they live badly, subjects ought to take heed and to beware of their evil works in advance. Hence Augustine says: "If human rule is to be obeyed, it is necessary that we be subject to divine government,2 for Christ himself says, 'He who heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me.'" And, further on, Augustine adds: " Nevertheless, because he foresees that not all will in the future be of this kind, he took all kinds of subjects into the company of his disciples and said, admonishing them in advance, 'The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; whatsoever things they say to you, these do, but what they do, do not ye.'" And it is clear that, with the zeal of a good purpose, subjects should discuss the manner of life of their superiors or think of it, so that, if the superiors are good, the subjects may imitate them; if evil, they follow not their works, ' but in an humble spirit pray for them and take heed when they command good things. Otherwise, unless they discuss, they will fall with the blind leader into the hole, and easily it may happen that they will worship antichrist as God, and, like the Jewish people who followed their leaders — prcdatis — conspire against Christ the Lord.

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