EXPLANATION OF FOUR PARADOXES CURRENT IN OUR CENTURY

Daniele Concina, O.P.

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Title Page

EXPLANATION
OF FOUR PARADOXES
Current in Our Century
REFLECTIONS
upon the two books of the Reverend Fathers Lecchi and Bovio, entitled *Warnings*, etc., and *Dissertation*, etc.
Preceded by a concise account of the books printed by certain Probabilists in defense of Probabilism and of other points of morals.
To His Most Eminent and Most Reverend Lord Cardinal
ANGELO MARIA QUERINI
Librarian of the Holy Church,
Archbishop and Bishop of Brescia, etc.
LUCCA · 1745
For the Marescandoli Brothers
At the instance of Simone Occhi,
bookseller in Venice at the Sign of Italy in the Merceria.

Dedication to Cardinal Angelo Maria Querini

DEDICATION

MOST EMINENT AND MOST REVEREND PRINCE

It is the ordinary custom, Most Eminent Prince, for anyone who dedicates a book to set forth in splendid display the most distinguished deeds of his patron, not so much in order to offer him a tribute of respectful homage as to increase the value of his own work, or to bring it greater luster through the greatness of that hero who permits it to be published under his name and deigns to take it under his protection. But on this occasion I find myself compelled to depart from that rule; for the heroic actions of Your Eminence are so many, and of such diverse kinds, that if historians will experience incredible difficulty when they must describe them distinctly, much more arduous would it be to be able, even compendiously, in a brief letter - not merely to adorn them in a beautiful and elegant style, but even to indicate them with exactness.

I shall therefore leave it to the many cities of Italy, especially Rome and Brescia, to employ their pens in describing the splendid monuments of your generous and incomparable munificence: the many buildings consecrated, not to false and worldly pomp, but all to the majesty of God - some rebuilt from their foundations, others magnificently restored and adorned - of which the very marbles will speak. I shall leave it to the learned to form the long catalogue of your many most learned works in various kinds of sciences and of sacred and profane erudition, in which the eloquence of a strong and vigorous manner of writing gives prominence to profound penetration of thought, vast comprehension, and the most exact criticism. This criticism succeeds with such felicity in the most entangled and abstruse difficulties, and so marvelously strikes the point, that with regard to the defense of Pope Paul II, on those points upon which all the other historians have foundered, the most illustrious man of letters Sassi writes thus: “I marveled that such powerful documents had been produced by you, and that testimony so clear and genuine, from cardinals of unimpeachable authority, had been drawn out of darkness into the light, so that henceforth no one may be able to contradict them unless he wishes to struggle against the current of a river and to be blind at midday.”

I shall likewise leave it to the learned gentlemen of Brescia, who have been benefited above all others, to describe how much you have thus far lavished for the advantage of that illustrious city and its extensive, most populous diocese. The library which you are now building, and for which you are gathering from every quarter the choicest books, beyond those which long ago and at great expense you had already collected for the common and perpetual benefit of that church of yours, will furnish a noble and most fruitful subject for the pens of those learned writers. I entrust all these various series of grand things to the historians - not of one or two, but of the many cities that have received your beneficence - so that they may be handed down to the memory of posterity. They will teach above all ecclesiastics of both low and high degree the manner in which revenues consecrated by the pious generosity of the faithful are to be employed for the worship of God and the relief of the poor. Finally, I shall say nothing of the illustrious distinctions of your most noble house, from which my Order boasts a celebrated Patriarch of Venice. This field also I wish to leave free and untouched for other writers.

Yet I have distinctly observed in you, Most Eminent Lord, two qualities which I cannot pass over in silence. One is that gentle affability by which, without derogating from the loftiness of your rank, Your Eminence knows how to accommodate yourself to the condition of each person. The other is that solicitous concern for the advancement of the sciences; for, not content to cultivate various sciences and to illustrate them with your most learned works, you promote them in others. These form that sublime character which, among so many other qualities, even those beyond the Alps discern in Your Eminence, and especially the celebrated journalists of Trévoux in last August's volume. Now what grounds for just reproach would there be against us Italians if, while even foreign writers speak of these most distinguished prerogatives of yours, we were to neglect them without particular mention, when we alone can give a sincere account of them: we who have the great advantage of seeing and experiencing the courtesy of your reception, the graciousness of your conduct, your most obliging manners, and the effects of your most powerful patronage; we, finally, who not only see the outward splendor of these virtues of yours, but understand their soul and spirit, which is the acquisition of new knowledge and the discovery of new truths.

Fearing that the majesty of your princely station may cause diffidence in those who converse with you and close the truth within their mouths, Your Eminence, by the most gracious encouragements, obliges everyone to utter his judgments with complete freedom, even when opposed to your own; and you tolerate with incredible patience and modesty the contradictions offered to your opinions in private discussions, so that the truth, or that which is more probable, may better appear. Foreigners can write of your other virtues and deeds, and posterity will be able to write of them; but we alone, MOST EMINENT PRINCE, have the privilege of transmitting to posterity and to foreigners the sincere memory of the prerogatives of yours just mentioned.

What posterity will scarcely believe is that, amid so many most serious occupations, Your Eminence knows how to find time both to grant prompt audiences to all who have recourse to you and to write so many most erudite works. Marcus Tullius observes that it is no wonder the Greek sages wrote so many works, since, removed from the concerns of the world, they applied themselves wholly to the sciences alone. 'We Romans, on the other hand,' Cicero continued, 'amid the din of war and in the very camps of armies write our histories, and to the political direction of so vast an empire we join the study of the soundest philosophy.' Now Your Eminence causes the great talents of the Caesars, the Tullii, and the other wise Roman heroes to be admired in yourself; for you know how to unite the cultivation of the most sublime literature and the production of the most erudite and learned works with the difficult government of a vast diocese, without application to the sciences prejudicing the fulfillment of your ministry, or the exact execution of the latter impeding the study of the sciences. What more? Amid your very journeys from Brescia to Rome you cultivate the most pleasing sciences; and, among the throng of almost continual audiences, in those fragments of time which remain, you allow the public to enjoy some new fruit of learning. I have had to make mention of these most singular qualities of yours, since those beyond the Alps themselves have drawn some portrait of them.

The single point, however, upon which I wish to pause a little longer is precisely the controversy treated in this book, which I come with the most respectful homage to offer to Your Eminence. This very book opens the way for me to speak of one of the most luminous and estimable excellences of

your character and your great mind: the wise and powerful zeal for the integrity of Christian morals, so deplorably corrupted and mishandled in these most calamitous times.

From this zeal of yours, Most Eminent Prince, fully known and manifest to the world, it happened that, when I learned that two of my many adversaries - who, in their usual fashion, would like to overwhelm me by their multitude when they see me alone - had adorned their replies to my work by placing at their head the great jewel of your most illustrious name, there awoke in my soul an ardent and most lively desire that they would likewise wish, by their appeal, to choose Your Eminence as the supreme and unappealable judge of this most important dispute, just as, to their great honor, they have succeeded in having you as the patron of whatever printed defenses they may possess. For then they would fortunately be drawn out of error, while I would be more firmly confirmed in the truth which, according to my ability, I uphold; and that very truth, cleared and purified of the disturbances of disputes, would issue from the most luminous tribunal of Your Eminence wholly beautiful and resplendent.

Known to the whole world are the sacred documents published by Your Eminence for the instruction and teaching of your peoples, filled with the purest doctrine of the Fathers of the Church and recalling to memory the holy discipline of those first fortunate centuries of the Christian religion; consequently, they are opposed to the excessively gentle discipline fostered by the system of the new Probabilists. But what I shall consider in particular are two, among your very many other pastoral letters, in which Your Eminence expounded the two exceedingly opportune briefs of our reigning Supreme Pontiff concerning the observance of the sacred Lenten fast. In those briefs, the opinion of the adversaries being excluded, that defended in my books is approved; and Your Eminence, in those two pastoral letters, with your customary clarity and with an abundance of ecclesiastical erudition and sacred doctrine, sets forth every smallest difficulty and prescribes excellent rules for Christian penance. From those pastoral letters I learned very many things for resolving, in my commentaries upon the two apostolic briefs, various difficulties raised by the lovers of gentle discipline.

Now, from consideration of these and innumerable other arguments published by Your Eminence in support and advancement of the soundest moral doctrine, how could there fail to awaken in my soul a strong desire that, just as the two adversaries mentioned above were eager to obtain your authoritative patronage for their labors, so too they and all their other comrades-in-arms might be induced to implore your irrefragable and peremptory judgment in the case pending between them and me? Apart from the judgment of the Holy See and of the universal Church, no better or more venerable judgment could be desired.

The reason for this desire of mine grows still further, Most Eminent Lord, and grows by far, when one reflects that the sacred Benedictine Order - without dispute the most conspicuous and venerable in the Church of God for the splendor of its holiness, learning, and every distinction - has declared itself entirely against the Probabilist system. Let it suffice for me to name one on behalf of all: the celebrated Cardinal Aguirre, a singular ornament not only of that Order but of all the Spains. He not only refuted Probabilism, as a most abundant source of lax moral opinions, with a fullness of sacred erudition and solid and profound reasons; he had, in addition, the glory of protecting and supporting the great Father General Tirso González amid the storms raised against him by his Society because he too had vigorously assailed that same Probabilism.

What greater assurance, therefore, could I have of a decision wholly favorable to me, and of the triumph of Probabiliorism even in the minds and hearts of my adversaries, than in a submission to the judgment of Your Eminence? In you, beyond all your personal qualities, notoriously adapted to sound morals, there is joined also the most just commitment of the whole sacred Benedictine Order, upon which you confer such luster by your blood, your dignities, your wisdom and erudition, your conduct, and your sublime deeds.

From this deference to your most wise judgment it would happily come about that, just as you have been directed by Divine Providence to employ your riches - even through savings from your own comforts and from a most frugal table - in erecting so many magnificent temples to the majesty of God, in enriching many others, and in feeding and relieving with most abundant alms so many poor persons of Jesus Christ, so also you would be the great one chosen by that same Providence for the reform and establishment of the true science of Christian conduct in so many other Catholic regions, just as you already are in your blessed diocese.

These are my prayers, Most Eminent Prince; these are my desires. If, through the fault of my adversaries, they should come to nothing, those same desires will nevertheless have the merit of having inspired in me the courage to have recourse, I too, to your most benign and equally powerful protection, which will know very well how to accommodate itself impartially to both sides. Nor do I fear any disadvantage because my recourse comes later; indeed, here my confidence in the rectitude of your judgment and in the greatness of your spirit shines all the more - that you will not disdain to acknowledge me as what, prostrate to kiss the sacred purple, I glory in declaring myself:

Your Eminence's
most humble, most devoted, and most obliged servant,
The Author

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Explanation of Certain Extraordinary Paradoxes

EXPLANATION OF CERTAIN EXTRAORDINARY PARADOXES

Drawn from the books of the Reverend Fathers Ghezzi, Lecchi, and Bovio, and of the Reverend Father Mansi of Lucca, their confederate

Chapter I — Introduction

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION
In which is briefly narrated the history of the various books printed and reprinted, even after the condemnation of the Holy Apostolic See, in defense both of the impure acts and of Probabilism
SECTION I

I. How long are books and booklets to multiply in defense both of that Probabilism which the holy Pope Alexander VII called a new mode of opining repugnant to evangelical simplicity, and of those touchings of the breasts condemned by the present, most wise Pontiff Benedict XIV through a decree of the Holy Office? Just when I had persuaded myself that, after the two books of Fathers Sanvitale and Ghezzi against the *History of Probabilism*, no other Jesuits ought to appear to succor imperiled Probabilism, behold, springing forth from the cantons of the Swiss, two other members of the Society, said to be the Reverend Fathers Lecchi and Bovio. With two large volumes they would like to supply the deficiencies of the two confrères just mentioned and to sustain that cause which was defended by them with little success. These two volumes will be refuted in the present writing. But let us first pass to the account of the books printed and reprinted in defense of the touchings of the breasts.

II. Before entering upon this narrative, I must warn my courteous readers not to confound the errors and excesses of certain private Jesuits with the illustrious Society, so deserving of the whole Church. There is no religious order, there is no community in this world, says Augustine, which does not have its own Judases. The facts - public facts, moreover - which I am going to relate to you are truly astonishing and horrifying; but they ought not on that account to diminish your esteem and veneration for the illustrious Society. They ought only to make you cautious, so that you do not render blind belief to the maxims of everyone, and to lead you, in Christian humility, to reflect that there is no error into which man cannot fall if the assistance of the Creator of man is lacking. Our adversaries will say that these are the usual pathetic little figures suggested by the art of slander and by affected hypocrisy; but he who judges us is God, not man. It will in fact be seen that the narrative is necessary. Nor is it directed to discredit even the private culprits, much less the renowned and innocent religious order of which they are members, but to preserve Christians of less experience from their errors and, finally, to awaken those who sleep, so that at last they may meditate upon the incredible extremes and horrid phenomena which are seen in our times. Let us enter upon it.

III. In the midst of the Probabilist war, a dissertation upon the reserved cases of that diocese was published by the presses of Venice. In that dissertation, under Case VIII, it is asked whether he incurs the reservation who, with a nun, commits or attempts sub-impure acts which are venial in themselves - for example, pinching cheeks or touching breasts - and mortal only from an evil affection or an evil intention. That scandalous doctrine produced scandalous effects both within and outside the convents. Father Benzi was warned by a canon, a man venerable for his probity and prudence, that he should reprint that page with moderation and correct the evil doctrine. Instead of correcting it, he composed an apology for it, preserved in manuscript, in which he branded the censors of his booklet as excessively audacious, in the letter written to the same canon with the

apology enclosed. In this complex of circumstances it was judged an indispensable necessity to succor imperiled chastity, and two Letters were printed in Venice in refutation of Father Benzi's book; they were then immediately reprinted in Rome, Lucca, and Venice. Father Benzi's book was denounced to the Holy Office. Various manuscripts in defense of that same book were circulated by Father Benzi's patrons. In the face of all these zealous defenses, the book was condemned by a solemn decree as containing false and scandalous propositions; and at the same time all books, both printed and to be printed, in defense of the condemned book were condemned in advance.

IV. In the face of all these condemnations there appeared the first *Salutary Notice to the Author of the Two Letters, That He May Know Himself*, printed clandestinely in Rome; and not long afterward the second *Notice* was likewise printed clandestinely in Rome. The things contained in these two Notices - not salutary, but certainly pestilential - are matter for bitter tears and deserve, not refutation, but public detestation. These books were distributed secretly in Rome, but the secrecy was not as great as was necessary. The public authority caused a search to be made in Settari's bookshop, and about five hundred copies were found there. The bookseller, having been taken into custody, confessed that the printing had been done by Mainardi and that the Jesuit Fathers Faure and Castellini had promoted it. The very original of the *Notices*, written by Father Faure, was found; but during the examination, since he could not deny his handwriting, he excused himself by saying that he had copied them from another original. When was the use of mental reservations ever more necessary! The proofs, however, that he was the author of such *Notices* were so powerful that he could not avoid a mild sentence of some days of spiritual exercises, fasts, and disciplines. The poor bookseller Settari, afflicted amid seizures and expenses, died of them; and Mainardi was left gravely injured in his purse by the pecuniary penalties. Whether the two aforementioned Fathers are bound to compensate these losses, let another judge.

V. At the same time, there was printed clandestinely in Venice, in defense of the touchings of the breasts, the most infamous and coarsest book ever seen, entitled *Solemn Retractation of Fra Daniele Concina*. They published a similar imposture against the great Cardinal Noris, as may be seen in the volume of his *Pelagian History and Minor Works*. As soon as this *Retractation* was published in Rome, it was condemned as a defamatory libel by a decree of the Holy Office. A report was spread that the man calumniated wished to exercise the right of nature through a forceful defense, by reprinting the books of his adversaries with brief notes under this title: *Monuments of Practical Morals*, etc. Upon this false supposition, a supreme command was solicited which forbade him to refute the said *Retractation*, his innocence having been placed under protection by the condemnation of the calumnious libel. Father Concina replied to that command that it had never even entered his mind to write against such a *Retractation*, directed solely to discredit his person; that as resolved as he was to defend the Christian truths necessary for eternal salvation, so constant was he in bearing with evangelical patience the calumnies of his adversaries; and that he would deem himself exceedingly unhappy if he had not learned to endure those injuries which have always been joined to the defense of truth.

VI. Hear an incredible but most true thing. After the gentlemen Probabilists, authors of the aforementioned books, had made certain that Father Concina would never refute the said *Retractation*, even if he had liberty to do so, they caused that same *Retractation*, condemned by the Holy See, to be reprinted in Lucca within this very year 1745, and they published it in every corner of Italy. Some of

them in Venice sell it in their house at thirty soldi a copy. Is this not a most honorable manner of proceeding? To force the innocent man who has been calumniated to keep silent, and then, more than ever, to multiply the calumnies against him! I could not bring myself to believe such a fact, although it was affirmed to me by witnesses incapable of lying. To make certain of it, I caused several copies to be bought from the said gentlemen Probabilists, who without any scruple sell books condemned by the Holy Apostolic See even to those uneducated persons who have no permission to read them - books containing nothing but the most horrid calumnies. What astonishes all wise men is that their superiors do not correct these unfortunate subjects, who bring infamy only upon themselves and their own religious order, which otherwise ought not to suffer prejudice from the faults of certain private persons. Nor can it be said that these facts cannot be established, since they are already public. Is it not perhaps said publicly that Fanucci, a Jesuit of Lucca, has caused the *Retractation* to be reprinted in Lucca with others? Is the sale which some make of this *Retractation* in Venice not known to all? Is it not known that it is distributed to the proselytes of the party with notes signed in their own names, which are preserved, and with these phrases: "The *Retractation* is written with a somewhat untempered pen; it abounds in a little pungency and some wit; otherwise it is a masterpiece"? The slightest examination made by the superiors would discover both the author and the sellers of the condemned, defamatory libel. This is said solely for the honor of the Society. Otherwise, if Father Concina regards in the light of the Gospel both the *Defense against the Appealing Lent* and the aforementioned *Retractation*, both defamatory libels, he continually prays in a spirit of charity: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." If, however, he considers them with a human eye, he laughs at and makes sport of such adversaries, who in literary controversies know how to answer with nothing but abuse far too unworthy of an honorable person and far too shameful for those who printed it. For the rest, he says with Moses: "Pray to the Lord that he take away the frogs from me and from my people" (Exodus 8). It suffices for him to be certain that the opinions which he refutes are false and scandalous, and have been declared such by the Holy Roman See, as appears both in the decree of the Holy Office against Father Benzi's book and in the two pontifical briefs against the lax opinion which dispensed Christians from the fast, defended by his adversaries and refuted by him in his *Appealing Lent*, in his *Ancient and Modern Discipline concerning the Fast*, etc., and in his *Commentary on the Rescript of Benedict XIV to the Archbishop of Compostela*. Of these last two books, the present Supreme Pastor, in his encyclical letter *Most Willingly* to the patriarchs, primates, metropolitans, etc., of the Catholic communion - a letter filled no less with heavenly unction than with sacred doctrine and erudition - makes, with incredible clemency and condescension, an honorable remembrance never merited by the author, in the following words: "Nor have eminent theologians among the Italians been lacking, who illustrated with excellent commentaries Our Apostolic Letter issued in the year 1741. The same occurred with the reply which We made to the Archbishop of Compostela on 8 July 1744, which indeed they meanwhile took care to accomplish in their books. But because books of this kind have perhaps not yet reached you, or, occupied by other cares, you have by no means been able to read them through, We have joined those documents to this encyclical letter," etc. For Father Concina, these illustrious monuments favorable to the doctrine defended by him are enough; for the rest, he gives no thought to the atrocious injuries hurled by his adversaries against his own miserable person, unfortunately all too sensitive. What displeases him is to see his friends likewise unjustly calumniated in the books just mentioned. It is asserted on page 24 that the author of the *Dogmatic and Moral Dissertation on the Material Use of Words* has written that

Father Cataneo teaches that in certain cases it is lawful to tell a lie. But where, in what book, upon what page has this most learned theologian written it? From the title page to the very end, with rare erudition, profound doctrine, and evident arguments, he demonstrates how bizarre is Father Cataneo's paradox. Cataneo, while confessing with all Catholics that every lie is forbidden by God, through his material use of words removes every lie from the world in cases of grave necessity. The author shows that this empty invention of Father Cataneo was unknown to all the wise men of antiquity, Christians as well as pagans, who in good faith disputed whether in cases of grave necessity a lie was lawful. Some affirmed it; others denied it. But it occurred to no one that words signified nothing in the cases mentioned, as Father Cataneo pretends, who wishes a straightforward "no" to signify neither yes nor no. This is the doctrine refuted in the dogmatic-moral dissertation. So long as the Reverend Father Retractor calumniates Father Concina concerning countless matters, he can in some manner flatter himself that he has not been convicted as a falsifier; but to have the audacity to allege that the author of the cited dissertation writes that Father Cataneo teaches a lie to be lawful in certain cases, when the printed book expressly proclaims the contrary, is an evident demonstration of the blindness of the wretched Retractor, whose name is withheld out of compassion.

VII. All that I have related thus far is nothing. The *Retractation* offers little defense of the touchings of the breasts, being occupied almost wholly in weaving unheard-of calumnies against Father Concina and others of his friends. The book printed clandestinely in Venice under this title, *Judgment of a Certain Theologian*, is the most wicked and scandalous book ever seen from a Catholic author in this class, because of the horrid abuse made in it of the Holy Scriptures. The theologian-author excuses himself by saying that the booklet was printed without his knowledge and against his will. I firmly believe him. But why is the scandalous doctrine not detested by a public and solemn retractation? Either it is confessed that the doctrine of the touchings of the breasts taught by Father Benzi is false and scandalous, or it is not. If it is not, the Holy Roman See, which condemned it as such, is rashly contradicted. If it is, why is the indispensable recantation not published? Is there an escape? Is there an evasion? The book is distributed by members of the Society. It is secretly sold in Venice for fifteen soldi and is passed through the hands of half-learned men most inclined to the lustful doctrine. From several provinces I have received letters saying that this *Judgment of a Certain Theologian* does infinite harm and finds innumerable followers, who go about saying that if Father Benzi's book were not prohibited, it would no longer be prohibited. Every good Catholic here sees the necessity of the indispensable remedy.

VIII. Several times I have been on the point of reprinting that booklet with brief notes. But, in order to abound in respect and deference toward the author and his venerable Society, I have wished to defer, hoping for the necessary remedy from them. I shall mention here in passing two or three sophisms from the said booklet for the instruction of the unskilled. I venerate the theologian as precisely a learned, erudite, and upright man. I say only that in the booklet, besides the scandalous doctrine, a prodigious ignorance shines marvelously. It is denied that such touchings provoke lust, contrary to the testimony not merely, I shall say, of all physicians and of women, but of the whole human race. Acumen and scholastic precision are displayed, and the first elements known to every schoolboy are shown to be unknown. A display is made of these formulas: *of its own kind, of its own nature, of its own essence, from itself, of itself*, etc. From them the theologian wishes to infer that, if the aforementioned touchings were culpable of their own nature, they would always be so, even in a case of infirmity. He is ignorant that there are two classes of actions which are such in themselves and of

their own kind. Some are such in every state, without any circumstance being able to alter them, as are hatred of God, idolatry, lying, etc. Others, which are called moral, are absolutely evil but on account of some circumstance cease to be so. Theft of its own kind is a sin, but extreme necessity takes away from it the being and malice of theft. Homicide in itself is culpable; necessary defense or public authority renders it inculpable. Touchings of the private parts are sinful of their own kind; the infirmity of childbirth or other maladies renders them innocent. Touchings of the breasts are sinful of their own kind; the necessity of treating a wound in those given parts renders them lawful. The moral dialectic of the theologian is this: it is lawful in a case of extreme necessity to steal; therefore theft of its own kind is not a sin. Touchings of the private parts are lawful in a case of childbirth or infirmity; therefore they are lawful of their own kind. Touchings of the breasts and private parts are permitted to a physician or surgeon in a case of wound or infirmity; therefore they are not forbidden of their own kind, and certainly they do not gravely excite to venery? This is the fine dialectic of our theologian, who has gone so far as to print this horrid proposition: "Now indeed, the doctrine proposed concerning the intrinsic indifference of touchings of this kind is so certain that it seems it cannot be denied without danger of error in the faith. For it is established, first, from Sacred Scripture in many places - for example, from the passage of Mark, 'They shall lay hands upon the sick,' etc.; and from the last chapter of James, 'Is anyone among you sick? Let him bring in the priests, who shall anoint him,' etc. It is established, second, from the sacraments instituted by Christ, especially Extreme Unction." Has a more sacrilegious abuse of the Holy Scriptures ever been heard? The theologian produces the examples of Saint Bernardino and Saint Philip Neri, and the very doctrine of Saint Thomas, who teaches in II-II, question 154, that a kiss, an embrace, or a touch, considered in its own nature, does not denote a mortal sin, for these things can be done without lust, etc. Most true doctrine. Touchings of the hands, kisses upon the forehead, and ordinary embraces among friends are signs of reciprocal friendship. Therefore, according to the dialectic of our author, touchings of the breasts and private parts are not culpable in themselves. Where, in the cited place or elsewhere, does Saint Thomas speak of touchings of the breasts? Because touchings of the hands and kisses upon the forehead are lawful according to Saint Thomas and according to everyone, are the touchings and kisses of every other part therefore lawful? I confess the truth: when I read this horrid calumny, by which the Angelic Doctor himself is made the author of a putrid doctrine condemned by the Church, I felt impelled to repress such great temerity against so great a master. But I confess likewise that I have always regarded all these defenders of the touchings of the breasts as men deserving compassion and commiseration, not refutation. The Reverend Father Theologian wishes to say two further words on page 5: "First, it now follows from this unshaken doctrine that, without doubt, the proposition directly contrary to it deserves condemnation - the proposition which the anonymous author of the letters against Father Benzi expressly delivers and professedly maintains, namely that proposition on page 19: 'The deliberate touching of a woman's breasts is of its own kind a mortal sin.' Nor is it assisted by its specious severity." A little specious severity in this matter is always advantageous. To understand the deplorable misfortune of our author, let it be reflected that he defends Father Benzi's doctrine, as appears from the very title, *Information in the Case of Father Benzi*, and from page 11, where, having transcribed Father Benzi's doctrine, he theologizes thus: "In this question Father Benzi considers the act in its external being, for he has as his aim to see whether it is affected by reservation. And he says, or rather supposes, three things. He says first that there are external acts in the world which are sub-obscene, or, as he speaks in less correct Latin, sub-impure.

And on page 12: according to the ancient Latin writers they are elegantly called sub-obscene, sub-foul, and barbarously sub-impure." Good heavens! Have you heard the most Latin theologian? Father Benzi speaks barbarously because he called touchings of this kind sub-impure. But the clauses just transcribed? The periods of our most Latin theologian - namely, *considers the act in its external being, has as his aim to see*, and *supposes* - are beauties of Terentian Latinity. Let this be said for diversion, and so that the wretched author of the *Retractation*, who was not ashamed to reproach a printer's error, may open his eyes and recognize that both he and those who have written with him in defense of the touchings of the breasts show that they know little of the vernacular and perhaps less of Latin.

IX. Thus, returning to the point, the theologian speaks of those deliberate touchings of which Father Benzi speaks; that is, touchings practiced not through some necessity, infirmity, or accident, but deliberate touchings elegantly called sub-obscene by the ancient writers. Father Benzi, finally, speaks of touchings of the breasts of virgins, spouses of Jesus Christ; of touchings of the breasts which can be preceded and accompanied by pinching of the cheeks, which according to him are of venial matter. Father Concina speaks of these determinate touchings in his two Letters, and asserts that such deliberate touchings are grave sins of their own kind. And the Reverend Father Theologian declares that this doctrine "deserves condemnation without doubt," in order to remove from the world a new, most cruel Rigorist. What has been said thus far suffices for the complete refutation of another little book falsely entitled *The Doctrine of Saint Thomas*, in which the author, agreeing entirely with the theologian - O blessed pair! - after all the prohibitions and decrees of the Holy Roman See against Father Benzi and the books which defend him, pretends to show the ignorant populace that the Angelic Doctor taught the same shameful proposition concerning the touchings of the breasts, and that it is not only innocent but that the contrary proposition of the author of the Letters is worthy of censure. The brief reflections just given suffice to clear so black a stain from the Sun of Aquino; but let us return. The other capital error condemned in Father Benzi is that one who blasphemes from habit, through lack of actual advertence, does not commit a new sin. Our theologian writes on page 15 of his *Judgment*: "If perhaps, beyond the matter thus far elucidated, proceedings are brought against Father Benzi on that other head, namely acts committed from habit without any actual advertence, the matter concerns a most serious and subtle inquiry, in which the most grave question of invincible ignorance is touched - ignorance which, although the Church has declared that it excuses from formal sin, nevertheless the modern heretics," etc. A most elegant escape! Why parade mysteries? Does it take much to recognize that this scandalous doctrine is the legitimate daughter of the heresy of Philosophical Sin? Here I ought to say many things, but I wish to pass them over, so as always to give greater signs of respect and modesty. I believe that everyone sees how much I could say.

X. In fact, for this same reason I would never have revealed the name of the theologian, although known and manifest to everyone, had I not read in a printed book that the author of the booklet entitled *Judgment* is the Reverend Father Theologian of the Sacred Penitentiary. I am most fully persuaded that, when this book is denounced to the Supreme Tribunal, it will be severely proscribed. The whole world knows that the Holy See is accustomed to punish with particular vigilance and severity the errors of those authors who hold some rank in Rome, upon the just and most prudent reflection that the books of such authors are reputed to possess greater authority and are capable of making a greater impression. We have a clear example of this in the celebrated Father Siberio, a Discalced Carmelite and author of twelve folio volumes in defense of Catholic dogmas. He erred on

one page of his first volume. Not only was his book condemned, but the said Father Siberio was deprived of the prefecture which he had held for so long in the Propaganda and of his lectureship in the Seminary of San Pancrazio, after forty years of service; and he was obliged to print a public retractation, which is read inserted in his book. Let this be said to show how greatly the Holy See watches over the proscription of those books and the correction of those theologians who, chosen for its service, abuse their rank to print books pernicious to morals and prejudicial to the honor and splendor of that same Holy Roman See. Of this booklet of the Reverend Father Turani I do not wish for the present to say anything further, hoping to see it retracted and detested by Father Turani himself. Let us therefore continue the history.

XI. After the aforementioned *Judgment of a Certain Theologian* was printed in Venice, seeing that it was well received by worldly men, it has in these days been reprinted in Lucca, joined to three other little works in defense of the touchings of the breasts, under this title: *Father Concina's Truly Golden Little Works*. I have not yet seen this reprint made in Lucca; but one who has read all the little works has attested it to me, and I expect these rare monuments to reach me at any moment. In Lucca too, some months earlier, both *Salutary Notices* upon the same cause were reprinted. The things narrated appear incredible, and if I did not have the books in my hands I would be incredulous; but the facts are most certain and manifest to all Italy.

XII. But how? In Italy - everyone will say - in Italy, under the eyes of the supreme ecclesiastical authority, are books condemned by the Holy Office reprinted? Is the *Retractation*, condemned as a defamatory libel, both reprinted and sold by some of those very men who have the fourth vow of obedience? Father Benzi's doctrine is condemned; books published and to be published in its defense are condemned; and are the *Salutary Notices* reprinted? Is the *Judgment of a Certain Theologian* printed and reprinted? Are the *Truly Golden Little Works* reprinted? I do not wish here to discuss what doctrine governs these bold and contemptuous actions. It is indeed being said that in these decrees the Supreme Pastor speaks as a private doctor, that he does not speak *ex cathedra*, and other similar little doctrines are circulated which in their time will be disclosed with authentic documents. The friend who gives me information about the praised, truly golden little works adds: "In their preface there is indicated a principle of theology perhaps until now unknown to all Catholics, by virtue of which one may write and print with impunity, in defiance of all the decrees and prohibitions of Rome. Here is the principle: Surely because the Roman censors forbid the defense of scandalous, erroneous propositions, etc., which are found in Father Benzi, do they at the same time and by the same principle forbid, when the author is the same, the defense of those propositions which are not of this kind? From this principle you see the consequence. In these little works the innocence of the touchings of the breasts is defended. In another book the innocence of habitual blasphemies will be defended. Others, by the same right, will be able to defend separately the other propositions which, according to this author, are scandalous and erroneous in Benzi, saying to everyone that they are not of this kind. And behold, the prohibition of Rome comes to fall only upon sections of the book; and the decree by which our Holy Father Benedict XIV 'condemns and forbids any writings or books, published or to be published, containing a defense of that same book' must be understood only of works defending those sections, not of those defending the doctrine. I believe that the great Caramuel, when he praised the golden happiness of the present centuries, in which through the perspicacity of the Probabilists that which was sin in ancient times has now become innocent, nevertheless never went so far as to foresee the discovery of this Golden Key indicated in the preface

to the *Golden Little Works*. By means of it, with all respect and devotion to the Holy See, as is vaunted there, one might defend whatever it condemns; the books which it forbids in advance might be promulgated; and the doctrines censured by it as scandalous and false might be spread with impunity throughout the world and taught as most true and edifying." Thus far the friend, to whose words I now deem it superfluous to add anything. I know that in one city a show is made of detesting such proceedings, and a figure is made of weeping before certain prudent personages; but no remedy is applied, although it is known with certainty that various subjects throughout Italy carry the aforementioned condemned books in triumph. Even if the duty of obeying the commandments of the Church, even if the very great obligation of repairing the ruinous destruction which such books cause among the Christian people, even if the consideration of not authenticating the report which has spread - whatever it may be - that great obedience and clamorous zeal are displayed for those pontifical bulls and decrees which condemn the errors of others, but that all those bulls and decrees of the Holy See which condemn one's own lax opinions and domestic errors are then evaded, while a multitude of books both vernacular and Latin are printed and reprinted against those same sovereign decrees, and an effort is made to do this with impunity by affecting ignorance of that which is public and known even to the blind - even if all these considerations were not sufficient to arrest the pens of our writers who defend the cause of Benzi, another powerful consideration at least ought certainly to dissuade them from the unhappy undertaking. And what is this powerful consideration? It is that of not acquiring a denomination from the matter which they defend. The commitment to defend the doctrine of Saint Thomas gained for some the name of Thomists; that of Scotus named others Scotists; that of Molina causes others to be called Molinists; that of the Probable denominates these men Probabilists. In like manner, the excessively advanced commitment to defend the touchings of the breasts will gain an exceedingly unbecoming denomination drawn from those same touchings. And lest it be believed that this is a vain fear without foundation, I shall relate the fact from which the sect of the Mammillarians took its origin.

XIII. Among the Anabaptists there was a young man of the city of Haarlem who put his hand into the bosom of a maiden whom he loved and wished to take as his wife. This deed came to the knowledge of the church, which immediately convened the assembly to decide upon the penalties with which the delinquent young man ought to be punished. Some considered the act so culpable that they judged the immodest delinquent deserving of excommunication. Others, of a more benign theology, were of the opinion that the enamored young man ought not to be punished for such an action. The dispute became so inflamed that it changed into an open rupture. The benign authors who defended the intrinsic innocence of the touching received the name *Mammillarians*, and the theologians who condemned the touching were called *Rigorists*. The history is so apposite that someone might perhaps suspect it of invention; and therefore I shall transcribe the original text, which is found in the volume of the impious and otherwise wicked dictionary of Pierre Bayle, under the letter M. Here is the text.

XIV. "Mammillarians: a sect among the Anabaptists. I do not know precisely the time at which this new schism was formed. The city of Haarlem is given as the birthplace of this subdivision. It owes its origin to the liberty which a young man took of putting his hand into the bosom of a maiden whom he loved and wished to marry. This touching came to the knowledge of the church, and upon it they deliberated concerning the penalties which the delinquent ought to suffer. Some maintained that he ought to be excommunicated. Others said that the fault deserved pardon and would never consent to

his excommunication. The dispute became heated in such a manner that a total rupture was formed between the parties. Those who had shown indulgence toward the young man were named Mammillarians. In a certain sense the fact does honor to the Anabaptists, for it is a proof that they carried the severity of morals much further than those who are called Rigorists in the Spanish Netherlands."

XV. If the Anabaptist doctors were denominated Mammillarians solely because they defended the touching of the breast of a maiden who was to become the wife of the delinquent young man; if they submitted to such a denomination without having printed any book in defense of similar touchings: what denomination will be encountered by those who, with so many books printed and reprinted, defend the intrinsic indifference of the touchings of the breasts of those very sacred virgins solemnly espoused to Jesus Christ? I submit all this to the judgment of the wise. I ask only: where is prudence, where judgment, where common sense in printing and reprinting so many books upon a matter so slippery, so odious, and finally condemned? Yet while I believed that I had finished the catalogue of such Mammillarian books, notice is given to me that a fourth edition of the *First Theological-Moral Letter* has been made, and that a fabric of notes in the vernacular language has been fastened to it, by which the matter is made clearly manifest to all the uneducated and to little women. I am told that reproaches, biting remarks, scurrilities, and especially the customary imputation of Pascalism and Jansenism are the strongest demonstrations by which the Letter itself is assailed. Hence on page 91, as they write to me, in order not to leave the annotator some sheets empty for which he finds no notes to the purpose, he spreads there a passage which fills four pages, from the *Constitutions, or Secret of Jansenism* published in a pastoral letter of the Bishop of Montpellier. This could not be more apposite for defending Father Benzi's doctrine concerning sub-impure touchings and for displaying the character of this gentleman annotator. I am told, however, that he is all quips and charm, and that, perhaps enamored from having heard the wit of Terence and Plautus praised, in order to distinguish himself in this species of elegance he scatters salt by the handful. Thus, on page 79 alone: annotation 120, "Oh, what cold salts!"; annotation 121, "What purgative brine? English salt"; annotation 122, "Foreign salt from Barbary"; annotation 123, "Fatuous and mendacious salt"; annotation 124, "This is good pumpkin salt!"; annotation 125, "This salt is very pungent, and cast with the force of a special character. It will indeed return to the table"; annotation 126, "And this we shall call fossil. Do you not see how it comes from below?" It is a pity that this gentleman annotator did not have some treatise on chemistry at hand, since with the aid of all those other salts which such authors distinguish, he would have enlarged his learned commentary and refuted in an insuperable manner the adversary's theological Letter. They add that all the remainder of the work is of similar taste, that is, vile, insipid, miserable, and scarcely worthy of remembrance. May the gods grant better things!

XVI. The end of this concise, exceedingly brief narration is to show those who command within the Society the unavoidable necessity of applying some remedy. The books mentioned are printed and reprinted publicly with unheard-of contempt for the Holy Apostolic See. Therefore, in order that the world may remain convinced that the aforementioned books were caused to be printed by private persons against the will of their superiors, and in order that the obstinacy of a few private persons may not prejudice the prompt, religious obedience of the illustrious Society toward the Holy See, it is indispensably necessary to detest the aforesaid books in a public writing. This remedy is demanded by the honor of the Society, respect for the Holy See, zeal for sound doctrine, and the duty of

repairing the fatal scandal which Catholics and heretics receive from such books. The illustrious Society is in such possession of esteem and veneration before the world that all books which issue from this religious order are received by a great part of Catholics as oracles. Christians, seeing the edifying exemplary conduct of so many Jesuits; seeing their many apostolic missions, their indefatigable assistance in the churches, so many catechisms, sermons, confessions, spiritual exercises, and instruction of youth, infer upon a foundation not to be despised: therefore, from this religious order there can issue only good books and sound doctrines. Is it likely that religious men of such probity and learning would wish to damn themselves in order to favor the Christians of the world? So many remain so strongly dazzled by such reasoning that it is impossible to enlighten them to distinguish the errors of this or that private person from the holy maxims of the community. Thus the splendor of the body gives standing and renders luminous the very errors of private persons. Now, just as it is unjust that the splendor of the body should remain obscured by the failings of some private person, so it is repugnant to justice that the errors and lax opinions of private persons should receive advantage from the credit and esteem of the body. Finally, the private persons who today appear in the field in defense of lax opinions are in so considerable a number that, if some public contrary sign is not given, there is danger that the world may suspect either that the evil has advanced too far or that there is connivance in some of those who ought to cooperate in the remedy. If this remedy is not seen, notice is given that all the books published by Jesuits upon the aforementioned matter will be reprinted with brief but significant notes, under a just title, and with the names and surnames of the authors and of the accomplices who contributed to the printing made manifest. Nor will it then be possible to throw dust into the eyes of the simple by the customary recourse to charity; for it is precisely in order to abound in charity that such a reprinting has not yet been carried out. The alternative, however, is unavoidable if the scandal produced by such books, and produced daily, is to be removed from the world. Either the superiors of the Society must reprove, in just and effective ways, these books published by their subjects; or it is necessary, through a new printing of these books, to disabuse the public by setting the impure doctrine in its natural view and making manifest the names of the true authors, so that they may not remain confused together and covered beneath the splendor of the holy Society. Before the two Letters against the doctrine upon the eighth reserved case were published, Father Benzi was caused to be warned by a most worthy canon. At present the warning is being given beforehand by means of print. Another evident consideration ought to move the superiors of the Society to detest the aforesaid books by a public writing. At present, in two French letters, it is made known to the public that the Jesuits have always been obedient, and most especially now will be obedient, to the pontifical diplomas against the superstitious rites of China and Malabar. If all Europe sees that in Italy seven little volumes by different authors have been printed - namely, the *Retractation*, the two *Notices*, and the four *Truly Golden Little Works* - in defense of the touchings of the breasts condemned by the Holy See, it will reason in this manner: the pontifical decrees are not obeyed in Italy, in Rome itself. Under the eyes of the sovereign Supreme Pontiff, books in defense of the condemned doctrine are printed and reprinted; and will it then be claimed that in the Indies and in China the sovereign decrees are promptly obeyed?

They do not obey in the presence of the prince, and will they obey at a distance? To dispel such reasonings, protracted little words are not enough; real remedies are wanted.

SECTION II

Brief account of the books printed against the *History of Probabilism*

I. The first who took up the pen against the *History of Probabilism and Rigorism* was, as has been said, the Jesuit Father Giacomo Sanvitale, who sent from Ferrara to Verona, and then from Verona to Venice, a small manuscript so that it might be printed. But his own companions judged it so weak that they prevented its printing. The author changed some things and then published it through the presses of Lucca. About a year later the same theologian put forth another little book of two sheets. This is directed wholly to discredit the author of the *History of Probabilism*.

II. Father Niccolò Ghezzi's *Seven Dialogues*, likewise printed in Lucca, are the second book published against the said *History*. The twelve *Warnings* of the distinguished mathematician Father Lecchi form the third volume; and the fourth volume against the same *History* is the *Theological Dissertation* of the Reverend Father Bovio, who, contrary to what I had believed, has also committed himself to the conspiracy of the others. Both these volumes were printed in Einsiedeln, where Father Bovio, with another companion, went and remained for many months in order to carry out the printing, at the cost both of inconveniences and of grave expenses - if indeed expenses ought to be called grave with respect to men so wealthy. I hear it said that Ghezzi, Lecchi, and Bovio are at present being reprinted in Venice, and that another book by Father Richelmi, a confrère of the aforementioned Fathers, is being printed upon the same subject. It will probably be a medley of cavillations similar to those which he already published years ago against Signor Ballerini. I therefore think not to throw away even a scrap of time upon such little books dictated by a party spirit.

III. At first sight it seemed to me a species of oppression to see so many fighting against one alone. On one side, the inequality of the literary conflict ought to place the author of the *History of Probabilism* in despair; on the other, this very numerous squadron of adversaries ought to serve him as courage for the defense and as the most valid argument that the cause must be impregnable against which a legion of men of letters conspires without being able to move it in a single point. What will the Reverend Father N., unhappy author of the aforementioned *Retractation*, now say? In it he makes Fra Concina speak the following words: "I hoped that the Fathers of the Society, seeing themselves touched in so delicate a part, would take offense and would at least do me the honor of some reply.... I expected to be roughly handled, and yet I was content with it, provided that it could be said that they had taken some trouble over my writings, that I had succeeded in disturbing them a little, and that finally they did not disdain to fight with Fra Concina." Whoever compares this text with the many books printed by different Reverend Fathers of the Society against Fra Concina's *History*; whoever considers so many other books and booklets printed against Fra Concina's two Letters; whoever reflects upon the proceedings and condemnations of the author of the two *Salutary Notices*, and upon the ruin of the two Roman booksellers on account of those *Notices*; whoever, finally, reflects upon the long journey of the Reverend Father Bovio from Milan to the Swiss at Einsiedeln, and upon the grave expenditures for printing two volumes against Fra Concina; whoever gives attention to this whole heap of events, to so many tumults and noises, and to the multitude of so many men of letters, all armed against Fra Concina alone, will without doubt remain surprised and astonished, and will say within himself: So many noises, so many journeys, disturbances, expenses, and labors to refute Fra Concina's *History*? So many men of letters conspire against one man alone? Do they not consider

it a mark of cowardice for so many to conspire together in order to fight, united, against Fra Concina alone?

IV. If only these Reverend Fathers had divided the aforementioned *History* among themselves, and, of the five dissertations which compose it, one had undertaken to refute one and another another. But with an incredible confusion and prodigious disorder, almost similar, I would say, to that of the hussars and pandours, they stopped to sack some word or some trifling fact of no importance. Among so many combatants, there has not been a single one who dared directly to assail a single substantial point, much less a dissertation. The Segneris and the Terillis, who form the greater part of the cause, and whose books are seen wholly defeated in the *History of Probabilism*, are left without defense by these heroic confrères. Of the many errors and falsehoods disclosed in Father Segneri's three Letters, of the contempt for the holy Pope Innocent XI, of the many erroneous doctrines of the great Probabilist Terilli, and of the heresy of Philosophical Sin, not a word is said. By a profound silence, the *History of Probabilism* is authenticated as true and incontestable upon all the principal points mentioned. Of so many men of letters, one has occupied himself in biting at some word, another in cavilling at some phrase. They believed that multitude alone sufficed to overwhelm their adversary; and in fact, if the conflict were against his person, they would without doubt be the victors. But the point is that the battle has for its object the defense of Probabilism, which is a falling cause. A multitude of assailants serves to storm a bastion; but truth fears the multitude no more than falsehood hopes for aid from the multitude.

V. Having weighed all these things, my thought was to pass over all these books and booklets. It seemed to me that replying to them would serve for nothing but to foment factions, dissensions, and useless disputes. I feared that a spirit of rivalry, a secret pride in surpassing, and a most hidden arrogance in conquering - and not pure zeal for truth - might animate the undertaking. The teaching of the holy Apostle made a great impression upon my soul: “For while there is jealousy and contention among you, are you not carnal and walking according to man?” (1 Corinthians 3). One thing alone moved me from my first resolution: namely, that the aforementioned books are sufficient to surprise the common people, who regard the prudent dissimulation of such books as an inability to reply, they having been printed solely so that it might be said: “Yes, an answer has already been made.” And in this manner the good cause remains greatly prejudiced. This motive alone has led us to pass over in profound silence all those books which are directed to tear cruelly at the reputation of the author of the *History*, etc., such as the *Salutary Notices*, the *Retractation*, the *Judgment of a Certain Theologian*, the *Scudiscit*, and other unworthy satires. There was no need to cause commands to be imposed so that those books, which harm only their authors, might be left without refutation. On the contrary, the refutation of those others has been judged necessary; although in themselves they contain nothing solid against the good cause, nevertheless among the unskilled they can cause no slight prejudice to truth. And so that our writing may not be useless by stopping at the refutation of vain sophisms, I wish first to set forth the EXPLANATION of certain paradoxes which I see insinuated in the aforementioned books.

Chapter II, Section I — Paradox I: Concerning the Rigorism and Tutiorism of Our Century

CHAPTER II
PARADOX I
Concerning the Rigorism and Tutiorism of our century
SECTION I

I. There is no error, there is, so to speak, no crime against which the zeal of many Probabilists is so greatly inflamed and their eloquence armed as against Tutiorism and Rigorism. Against it they declaim both in private assemblies and in printed books. The Reverend Fathers Bovio and Lecchi, who oblige us to write these few sheets, bring this monster of Tutiorism and Rigorism upon the stage on almost every page. The Reverend Father Bovio especially distinguishes one mitigated Tutiorism and another severe, one heretical and another Catholic or semi-Catholic. This Rigorism and this Tutiorism are opposed to all the strongest arguments. It is exclaimed that we must guard ourselves well and not leap with joined feet into Tutiorism and Rigorism. And in printed books and private conferences, the warning against this sect of Rigorists and Tutiorists never ceases to be insinuated.

II. Whoever desires to know well and penetrate to the bottom how extraordinary and surprising this paradox is, may please compare it with the universal and visible custom of our century. Anyone unprejudiced and unacquainted with the life now led among Christians, on reading such books and hearing such theologians, would begin to reason in this manner. So the Christians of our century have become a sect of flagellants who, grown cruel against themselves, barbarously shed their own blood with disciplines, hair shirts, and scourges? They are like those idolaters of Baal who cut their flesh to pieces with little knives and lancets? They are a species of Circumcellions who, as though furious and frenzied, some go in search of martyrdom, others run to cast themselves from cliffs and precipices, others to hide themselves in woods and deserts; and those, finally, who remain in the cities, behold them pale, gaunt, and wasted by severe fasts, nocturnal vigils, and continual sufferings. So great is the respect, so great the devotion, so great the fervor and reverence toward the most august Sacrament of the Altar and of Penance, that the poor penitents cannot find confessors willing to absolve them or admit them to the sacred table unless they first prepare themselves to receive their God within themselves both with long penances similar to those of the first centuries and with a perpetual divorce from all profane entertainments and pleasures. Therefore we see Catholics in great numbers excluded even at holy Easter from participation in the sacred mysteries, for the sole reason of little fervor and little preceding penance. Priests, both cloistered and secular, then rarely approach the sacred altars because, recognizing the little fervor of their spirit, they do not deem themselves worthy to celebrate the unbloody sacrifice. The churches are so many deserts, and the scarcity of Masses is extreme, because priests do not offer the most sacred Victim except after severe fasts, fervent prayers, and abundant alms. The length of Masses has reached so great an excess that, in order to hear one entire Mass, it is necessary to consume a good part of the day. Everything, in sum, breathes rigor, severity, sadness, austerity, disciplines, and scourges.

III. This, without doubt, is the character and the idea which anyone unacquainted with modern customs would form of Christian penitents, confessors, theologians, and priests, from reading the

books and hearing the discourses of so many Probabilists who continually cry out: "Rigorism! Tutiorism in our times!" This sect of Rigorists, who crucify poor Madames, emaciated Marquises, and afflicted Marchionesses with most austere fasts and bloody disciplines, is the predominant sect and the one which makes slaughter of human flesh.

IV. This, you reply, courteous readers, is one of the most satirical ironies we have ever heard. We see with our own eyes that those same Christian men and women whose life is a continual chain of profane diversions, promiscuous conversations, games, banquets, and comforts; who carry luxury, pomp, and the most refined vanities in triumph - we see that those same Christian men and women frequent both confessions and communions. We see the immense multitude of Masses of priests and friars; we see the tepidity, lack of devotion, scandalous haste, indecent distraction, and open profanation with which they are celebrated. Dissoluteness floods and penetrates cloisters, hermitages, and sanctuaries, and evil custom triumphs almost everywhere. The sacrilegious profanations of the sacraments of confession and communion scandalize the heretics themselves. And amid so monstrous a Laxism, is there courage to cry out: "Rigorism! Tutiorism"? Because a troop of people blinded beyond the mountains has sown erroneous propositions of this kind, is it for this reason that in books printed for the direction of Catholics one cries out against Catholics: "Rigorism! Tutiorism," as though this Rigorism were the vice dominant in practice? We all see that this practical Tutiorism and Rigorism among us Catholics is a mask, a chimera. For let these gentlemen Probabilists answer a little. Are they capable of finding in all our Italy - and I could say the same of Spain and Germany - a single well-conducted Christian, observant of the Gospel and sincerely penitent, who is refused admission to the sacred altars because of excessive rigor? I challenge them all to find a single one. On the other side, is not the little fervor, the incredible brevity, and the lack of devotion of a very great part of priests in the celebration of the holy sacrifices evident? Is it not evident that Christian men and women of soft, vain, luxurious life frequent the most holy sacraments? Therefore it is evident as the light of midday that LAXISM is what dominates in our century, and that Tutiorism and Rigorism, in the actual visible practice of Catholics, are a ridiculous mask and a vain chimera. Therefore it is the most extraordinary and at the same time the most lamentable PARADOX to cry out "Rigorism! Tutiorism" at the very time when LAXISM triumphs in every corner of the Catholic world; at the very time when impurities, sacrileges, injustices, and profanations of sacred things and of the sacraments themselves overflow. And the still more surprising and stranger PARADOX is that those very men who see and touch with their hands this universal and dominant Laxism do not open their eyes and do not wish to resolve to detest that Probabilism which is certainly the most specious mantle with which to cover the deformity of sin. More clearly: is it not true that the specific character of our century is to remove the deformity from guilt, to confound virtue with vice, to couple the frequency of the sacraments with the less Christian customs, and finally to accommodate the holiness of the divine laws to the fashion and custom of the corrupt century? Is not that which Saint Augustine writes true? "For this is a great and customary perversity among men: although they themselves ought to live according to the will of God, they wish God to live according to their will. And since they themselves do not wish to be corrected, they wish him to be corrupted, judging not that what he wills is right, but what they themselves will" (*On Psalm 48*, discourse 1).

V. What will so many Probabilists ever answer to temper the horror of the paradox described? Perhaps they declaim against the Rigorism of books, not against the Rigorism of practice? And what

are these books of Catholic moral theologians filled with Rigorism? Merbesius, Natale Alessandro, Gennet, Antoine, Malatra, Elizalde, Camargo, Besombes, Pontas? Are these the Catholic moral theologians whom Christians commonly read? Let the gentlemen Probabilists designate the Rigorism and Tutiorism contained in these books and fatal to Christianity. Although challenged, they have never been able to find this Rigorism. Therefore the Tutiorism and Rigorism both of Catholics and of their practice, against which so many declaim and which they represent as a monster devouring souls and as a most cruel tyrant who strangles wretched Christians with the noose of despair, are a chimerical mask invented to cover Probabilism and Laxism in some manner. For the truth is that the Laxism of evangelical morals triumphs both in books and in practice. Here lies the point. The Laxism of practice has been the occasion for not a few moralists to enlarge the laws, with the upright and pious intention of rendering the way of salvation easier. And this Laxism, printed in books with a good intention, has, against the will of the authors, broken the embankments and thrown open the door to culpable customs. These are all visible and incontestable facts. Now, if we can justify the pious and upright intention of the authors who invented the lax propositions because they did not foresee the ruinous consequences, it seems that those admit of no excuses who in our times, seeing the overflowing torrent of laxities which triumph everywhere and reading the many condemned, lax propositions certainly existing in the moral books which pass through everyone's hands, nevertheless do not cease to exaggerate the extraordinary paradox of Tutiorism and the specter of Catholic Rigorism, as far removed from Catholics as Laxism is near and familiar to them.

VI. It is appropriate here for me to reply to an objection of the Reverend Father Niccolò Ghezzi which escaped my notice when I made my reply to his book. In his celebrated third Dialogue, after having narrated the severe lashings administered by two Jesuit Probabilists, in France at the parlor of Madame the Abbess to an abbé, and in Milan before Madame Cornetta to two Fathers of Saint ..., he passes on pages 188 and 189 to remind Father Concina that Christ used harsh manners only with the Pharisees. "The great Rigorists," writes Father Ghezzi, "all occupied in preaching severe morals loudly to the people, seem to make Christ always forget that divine heart of his, all gentleness and pleasantness ... to the point of calling them not merely hypocrites but 'brood of vipers,' 'whitened sepulchers,' and so many other expressions of bitterness and implacable hatred toward them.... Among all of them, then, one is singularly to be noted which Father Concina takes pleasure in applying to indulgent Probabilist theologians; but it was certainly appropriated by Christ to the scribes and Pharisees ALONE, at the very time when they were proclaiming maxims of rigid and severe morals, condemning Christ's disciples as transgressors: 'For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.' But Christ, having driven them away from there with harshness, said of them to the disciples: 'Let them alone; they are blind and guides of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch' (Matthew 15). So it is. Let Father Concina reread this text, which he dares to cite against the Probabilists even in the very introduction. Let him reread it attentively."

VII. It is necessary to obey a duplicated command of Your Reverence, all the more because a learned and erudite man of letters has told me that a just reply to this high-sounding objection is necessary. I sincerely passed over various little things of the Reverend Father Niccolò Ghezzi, purely for the sake both of brevity and of honorable moderation, and especially also in view of the just regard owed to the Jesuits of Rome who reviewed Father Ghezzi's book. Now, forced by so many challenges, I reply that the Reverend Father Niccolò Ghezzi, with his learned reviewers, did not understand the holy text, and therefore unjustly charges Father Concina. Let Your Reverence not grow angry, but listen

calmly to the truth. In the cited Gospel text two things are contained: a particular fact and a general maxim. The particular fact is that the scribes and Pharisees are blind and guides of the blind: "Let them alone; they are blind and guides of the blind." The general maxim which regulates the particular fact is this: "If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch." Your Reverence writes that Father Concina, even in the very introduction, that is, the preface, applies the reproach made by Christ to the Pharisees, which is this: "Let them alone; they are blind and guides of the blind." Now I invite, I shall not say the whole world, but your own fellow members who reviewed your book, to read the cited preface on page XVII; and if there is even one syllable there of the particular fact pertaining to the Pharisees alone, I am willing to lose the case. In the preface, and throughout the whole *History*, the general maxim is spoken of, as much concerning those who make the evangelical yoke heavier as concerning those who lighten it. The most dangerous navigation of this mortal life is spoken of, and it is recalled that if the pilots go astray, all the passengers are lost with the pilots. Both rocks, rigor and laxity, are spoken of; and afterward the general maxim is reported: "If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch." Saint Augustine's comment is reported: "It terrifies not only the blind man who leads, but also the blind man who follows." Where has Father Concina written against the Probabilists: "Let them alone; they are blind and guides of the blind"? Does Your Reverence now see that, as in the other Dialogues, so in this one you plainly charge Father Concina wrongfully, as though he had reproached the gentlemen Probabilists with the reproach hurled by Christ against the Pharisees: "Let them alone; they are blind and guides of the blind"? If either in the preface, which is the place opposed by you, or in any other place of the *History*, this holy text is appropriated to the Probabilists, I, as I have said, am willing to sing your triumph. But if it is false, as it is most false, what must be said? Let Your Reverence learn to distinguish well in the holy texts particular facts from general rules applicable to many facts.

VIII. For the rest, in order to teach - or, better said, to suggest - to both Your Reverence and your learned reviewers a more exact diligence in reviewing your books before publishing them, it is useful for me to recall to you and to the whole Christian people various things concerning Rigorism and Laxism. First, the Rigorism of the Pharisees did not consist in an excessively severe interpretation of the divine law, but, on the contrary, in a disregard for the laws of God and of the Church, in order to promote domestic traditions and their own systems formed by them. May Your Reverence Father Ghezzi please read this holy text attentively: "You have made void the commandment of God so that you may keep your tradition.... Leaving the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men" (Mark 7). And in the same Saint Matthew, where Christ reproaches them for Rigorism, he prefaces: "Why do you transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?" (chapter 15). Thus it is evident that in the text opposed by Your Reverence there is no discussion of a Rigorism consisting in interpreting the holy law of God too severely. Rather, there is discussion of a Rigorism by which the Pharisees, having neglected the law of God, interpreted and promoted with immoderate severity the most rigid observance of their own human traditions, their own opinions, and their own domestic systems. This is the obvious, literal, and natural sense of the Gospel text opposed by you. I now leave Your Reverence to draw from it the just and natural consequences which derive therefrom. Secondly, traverse all Holy Scripture, both the Old and the New Testament, and you will find that God warns the people to keep watch especially against the prophets who enlarge the holy law. Isaiah begins: "My people, those who call you blessed, they themselves deceive you" (chapter 3). I would fill several sheets if I wished to transcribe here the texts of the holy prophets to this purpose. Christ in

Saint Matthew inculcates, as in all the other Evangelists and sacred writers, his tremendous maxim: "Wide is the gate and broad is the way which leads to destruction, and many there are who enter through it. How narrow is the gate and strait is the way which leads to life, and few there are who find it" (chapter 7). And immediately he adds: "Beware of false prophets," who attempt to enlarge that gate and sweeten that way. Finally, what does the Apostle Saint Paul say, speaking of our times near the end of the world? "For there shall be a time when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires they shall heap up for themselves teachers, having itching ears; and from truth indeed they shall turn away their hearing and shall be turned to fables" (2 Timothy 4). Does he perhaps allege Rigorism as the badge of perilous times? Does he not repeatedly warn his disciple: "Know this, that in the last days perilous times shall come. Men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, boastful, proud," etc.? These are the characteristics: laxity of morals and abandonment of the true faith, which the Apostle with the other prophets commonly assigns to distinguish perilous times. God preserve me from applying these fatal marks to the Probabilists, among whom so many upright men shine. But let a glance be cast upon modern conduct; let reflection be made upon the little doctrines which are printed daily, especially upon that one fresh from the mint: "Now indeed, the doctrine proposed concerning the intrinsic indifference of touchings of this kind - of the breasts - is so certain that it seems it cannot be denied without danger of error in the faith; for it is established from Sacred Scripture in many places, for example from the last chapter of Mark: 'They shall lay hands upon the sick,'" etc. Has a more putrid doctrine ever been heard? A more profane abuse of the Scriptures? But of such doctrine in its proper time. All this has been related to remind Father Ghezzi and his censors of a better criticism and more mature prudence in writing and reviewing books, and so that they may learn to speak with greater caution.

Section II — Paradox II: Concerning Prudence and Discreet Zeal According to Knowledge

SECTION II

PARADOX II

Concerning *prudence* and discreet zeal *according to knowledge*, vaunted by the authors of agreeable moral theology

I. There is no virtue in this world rarer than Prudence; and there is no virtue of which men boast so much as Prudence. If in a theater, Socrates used to say, an order were given that the weavers, smiths, counts, and marquises should rise, only those men would rise; but if an order were given that the prudent should rise, all men of every profession would then immediately rise or sit down, as Stapleton relates: 'If someone in a theater were to order all the shoemakers to rise, they alone would rise; likewise if he were to order the blacksmiths, the weavers, and generally the others; but if he were to order the prudent or the just to rise, they would all rise immediately' (*Dom.* 3, *adv.*, § 2). Seneca acutely observes that if Prudence were for sale, it would find no buyers, so well provided with it does each person consider himself.

II. The familiar and daily language of almost all those who make some figure upon the stage of this world is this: Prudence is needed; zeal must be discreet and regulated by Prudence. Oh, what a rare gem Prudence is! That man has zeal and holy intentions; but we are short of Prudence. It is necessary to consider the circumstances of our times and to reflect upon how much fruit may be hoped for. Silence is the character of the prudent man: 'But the prudent man will keep silence' (Proverbs 11). It is proper to the fool to speak when there is no hope of fruit: 'Where there is no hearing, do not pour out words' (Ecclesiasticus 32). If the Apostles and the Holy Fathers lived in our days, they would conform themselves to our customs. The Jeromes, the Augustines, and the Bernards would not write with so much liberty and so much salt.

III. If one had no experience of the custom of the present world, upon hearing such language everyone would believe that our century abounded in so many Elijahs, Nathans, Micahs, and Baptists, who with intrepid breast confronted the Ahabs, the Davids, and the Herods to reproach them for their murders, adulteries, and injustices. He would believe that it abounded in so many Thomases of Canterbury and so many Raymonds of Peñafort, who exposed their lives in order to manifest divine truths to their sovereigns. Everyone would believe that the cities and lands abounded in weeping Jeremiahs, who went crying aloud upon the walls of the city against the vices of princes and subjects, nobles and plebeians, priests and laymen. It would be believed that the public squares were filled with so many Saint Philip Neris, who, eager to be judged imprudent, indiscreet, and foolish for the glory of God, went crying through the squares and streets in order to inculcate heavenly truths and to disabuse the world, truly mad in its errors. It would be believed that the courts of princes and the palaces of sovereigns were depopulated of confessors and theologians who, out of a resolute zeal to admonish their respective sovereigns, upon finding them deaf to their counsels, withdrew from the courts, indiscreetly abandoned their princes, and retired into cloisters and deserts. Thus would all those who were ignorant of the state of modern Christianity believe, upon hearing everywhere the loud preaching: Prudence, Prudence! Discreet zeal, discreet zeal!

IV. But we, who know it and see it with our eyes and touch with our hand that one of the dominant vices of our century is adulation, dissimulation, and human respect, know also the deplorable blindness of these imaginary prudent men, of these fantastic discreet men. We know how extravagant and monstrous is the PARADOX of those who, being wholly ignorant of what Prudence is and what zeal is, never tire of preaching the practice of Prudence and discreet zeal.

V. There are four Cardinal Virtues: Prudence, Temperance, Justice, and Fortitude. These virtues, when true and perfect, are connected and inseparable, as Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas teach. Who are those who especially preach Prudence? They are intemperate, weak, and little just men. They speak of Prudence amid sumptuous banquets. When they have well fortified the stomach with savory dishes and strengthened the breast, they then dispense aphorisms of Prudence. Their spirit is so bound by the bonds of human regards that they fear and dread everything. The virtue of Fortitude frightens them, and only baseness of spirit and a self-interested hope of advancement govern the silence of their tongue. These are those mute dogs who do not dare to bark: 'Mute dogs unable to bark, seeing vain things, sleeping and loving dreams' (Isaiah 56). They see the virtue of Justice trampled and betrayed, and from a vain fear of overturning their own designs they keep silent. Let us hear Augustine: 'Certainly these things persuade us that whoever has one virtue has them all, and that all are lacking to him to whom one is lacking; because Prudence can be neither cowardly, nor unjust, nor intemperate. For if it were any of these, it would not be Prudence. Moreover, if it will then be Prudence when it is brave, just, and temperate, surely wherever it is, it has the other virtues together with it' (Epistle 29 to Jerome). Let that entire Epistle be read, where many examples are produced with which to confound these vain preachers of Prudence.

VI. But it is indeed true that many of these trumpeters of Prudence are commonly reputed wise and prudent. Augustine replies in the cited Epistle that there are vices opposed to virtue, and there are vices which are masks of virtue. Two Prudences are found: one true, the other false. The former is spiritual and supported by truth. The latter is carnal and worldly, and it sets itself up as arbiter frequently to decide moral controversies and to regulate the affairs of Discipline and Religion, as the learned Jesuit de Alberti observes in the preface to his *Moral Paradoxes*: 'This, namely, the prudence of the flesh, is that very prudence which, in examining controversies of conscience, in rendering judgment upon souls, and in governing the court of Heaven, recognizes the face; this is the prudence which considers the persons of men.' Let the entire preamble which this learned Jesuit prefixes to his *Moral Paradoxes* be read, and teachings most opportune for our point will be encountered. When these men suggest to men that they should be prudent, in reality they persuade them to be foolish, timid, cowardly, and mute, and to let the little boat run with the current of prevailing custom. This is discreet and wise zeal. This is the mature Prudence of these great prudent men of our century. And these are those of whom Saint Paul speaks: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will reject the prudence of the prudent' (1 Corinthians 1).

Section III — Paradox III: Concerning Charity toward Writers of Lax Propositions and Dangerous Opinions

SECTION III

PARADOX III

Concerning charity toward writers of lax propositions and dangerous opinions

I. Charity, a theological virtue, regards first God and then one's neighbor. It is an incontestable truth of fact that hundreds upon hundreds of lax opinions are found in those Moral Books which are in the hands of confessors as rules by which to direct the consciences of Christians. These lax and scandalous opinions are pernicious and fatal to the eternal salvation of Christians. If it is a duty of Christian Charity to disclose the plague of this man or that man in order to preserve the universal health of the human race, will it not perhaps be the strictest duty of Christian Charity to uncover the plague of souls? Many claim that the disclosure of such errors is repugnant to Evangelical Charity. The author of the *History of Probabilism* has in several places deliberately refuted this surprising paradox. But because the adversaries do not cease to repeat it at every step, it has been judged opportune to indicate anew how pestilential it is to the human race and how repugnant to the true Charity of Jesus Christ. Evangelical Charity, if it prescribes that private and personal faults be kept hidden and covered, commands that public errors which are pernicious to the eternal salvation of one's neighbor be publicly reproved. Reparation is made to the decorum and reputation of the deceased authors by excusing their intention. They wrote what they reputed to be true and conducive to the salvation of Christians. If they were alive, they would retract all those propositions which they saw either condemned by the Holy See or reproved by the most distinguished Churches and Universities. Therefore, to ascribe the manifestation of their errors to a violation of Charity is a monstrous illusion and an unheard-of PARADOX. More clearly: those very Probabilists who teach in their printed books that the Divine Commandment of Christian Charity obliges only at the point of death, or within the long interval of five years or three years, and scarcely ever of itself - these Probabilists, I say, or their partisans and followers, are the very men who always have Charity in their mouths. When? When they hear the doctrines destructive of Charity being refuted; when they see exposed in their true light those monstrous opinions which remove Charity from the world. Beneath this most ample mantle of human, not Divine Charity, they would like to place under cover all those Moderns who, with good intention, have by their moral books torn and almost annihilated the holy wedding garment of Charity. To the point: Is it true or not that the scandalous opinions are printed in the books? If not, let there be a loud cry of injustice and calumny. If it is true, let Charity be shown toward the human race, and especially the Christian race, so that it may not remain seduced by perverse opinions. Has a stranger PARADOX ever been heard? It is taught in printed books that the great Precept of Charity toward God and one's neighbor rarely obliges of itself. And at the same time those who write and preach against such doctrines are calumniated as violators of Charity? Write, some men of inclination answer, against the lax doctrines, but with Charity. Certain biting manners, certain salts, certain pointed replies could be omitted. Who are those who speak thus? They are men prepossessed by most grave prejudices and seductive passions, precisely after the fashion of those German or French partisans who always decide in favor of that party toward which they are driven by inclination. And who ever placed in their hands the most delicate scales with which to weigh, and the

compasses with which to measure, the phrases and manners by which Evangelical truths are to be defended? These men do not reflect upon the exceedingly grave danger of being lost through this immoderate inclination to declare for one party rather than another in matters of moral controversies upon which eternal salvation depends. Natural reason and the Divine Scriptures command us to raise our voice more or less according to the greater or lesser need. Fire threatens conflagrations on every side. And amid so many flames, would it be desired that the remedy be implored in a low voice and in pleasant and agreeable periods? The defenders of lax opinions suddenly hurl in one's face the names Jansenist, Rigorist, Calvinist. Now if the fool were answered according to his folly, as God teaches, who could justly reprove it? And then there is courage to criticize and condemn merely because, in just perspectives and with all modesty and respect, ridiculous opinions in matters of conduct are exposed? Let these men, I pray, reflect a little upon this most true maxim: the more malice increases, the more zeal and liberty to declaim against iniquity and scandal decrease. Malice in our times has almost reached its furthest bounds; and therefore the liberty to write against it is almost wholly extinct. Let all the books of past centuries be turned through, and a holy Apostolic liberty to reprove both dangerous opinions and public faults will be recognized. And at present we have arrived at this extreme: condemning, under erroneous pretexts of worldly Charity, the very liberty of writing and speaking against the most scandalous errors. Saint Paul, just as he distinguishes two kinds of Prudence, carnal and spiritual, so distinguishes two species of Charity: one of truth, the other of falsehood. The former is heavenly and divine; the latter worldly and human. He warns us that many perish because, having refused the Charity of truth, they love the Charity of falsehood: 'Because they did not receive the Charity of truth that they might be saved, therefore God will send them the operation of error, that they may believe a lie.' Nothing is easier than to exchange the Charity of truth for the Charity of falsehood.

II. It would be possible, they say, to refute the lax opinions of the Casuists without naming the authors. In that case the scandalous opinions transcribed would be passed off as mere impostures. If the transcribed words are cavilled at, what would happen if one appeared before the public without the texts in hand? Moreover, would not he sin who disclosed the plague in the abstract without indicating where it was, so that it might be avoided? What purpose would it serve to warn Christians that there are pernicious doctrines if the sources in which they reside were not pointed out?

III. But how, others reply, can that sharp and derisive style with which the opinions of so many Casuists are exposed to public hissing be reconciled with Charity? Charity regards not the error but the person. When the intention of the authors has been excused in the best manner possible, its duties have been satisfied. In the refutation of errors and lax opinions, the rules of truth must be observed, so as not to aggravate the error beyond what it is. The quality of the style ought to correspond to the condition of the opinions refuted. If the opinions are ridiculous, it is fitting to despise them in a ridiculous manner. If the matter is grave and important, the style ought likewise to be grave and majestic. When the partisans of the Casuists see certain monstrous opinions placed in a ridiculous display, they exclaim that moral truths are not to be treated with playful fashions and derisive jests. That is most true. But these men confuse the holy and pure rules of Evangelical Morals with the scandalous maxims of certain Casuists: the latter, not the former, are derided. Certain opinions invented in our days are so strange and so repugnant to common sense that they cannot be refuted in a better fashion than by being exposed under their naturally derisive aspect, while always preserving respect and veneration toward their authors. So opportune to this purpose is the passage

of Tertullian that, although reported elsewhere, it will not prove tedious to read it again: 'Reader, account this the sport of encounter before the battle. I shall show wounds, but I shall not inflict them. If there is laughter anywhere, the subjects themselves will have received their due. Many things deserve to be refuted in this fashion, lest they be honored by gravity. Mirth properly belongs to vanity; and it accords with truth to laugh, because it rejoices, and to make sport of its rivals, because it is secure. Care must plainly be taken lest its laughter itself be laughed at, if it is unworthy. But wherever something is worthy of laughter, laughter is a duty' (*Against the Valentinians*, chapter 6). I could transcribe innumerable texts of the Fathers in confirmation of this truth.

IV. The sharp style, sometimes sprinkled with playful witticisms according to the diversity of the subjects, is used by the Fathers, many say, against heretics, not against Catholic writers. Those who speak thus show themselves wholly ignorant of the works of the Fathers. Jesus Christ treated the Sadducees, who were the heretics of the Jews, with singular gentleness, as may be seen in Saint Matthew, chapter 22, verse 29; whereas he several times reproved the orthodox Pharisees with severity, calling them hypocrites, whitened sepulchers, blind men, and guides of the blind, as is read in Saint Matthew, chapter 23. The expressions with which the Protomartyr Saint Stephen reproaches the Jews in the seventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles are neither gentle nor sweet. The Epistles of Saint Paul, especially the first given to the Corinthians, are not rarely full of grave and strong expressions: 'His letters, they say, are weighty and strong' (2 Corinthians 10). Further, does not Holy Scripture, both of the Old and of the New Testament, reveal for eternal memory the misdeeds of holy David, wise Solomon, Samson, and so many celebrated personages? Does not the Gospel recount the betrayal of Judas, the denial of Saint Peter, and the contentions and rivalries of the other most holy Apostles? Shall the holy Evangelists perhaps be condemned as violators of Charity? And then will it be a failure of Charity to make manifest to the unskilled, for their disabusement, the lax, scandalous opinions of Escobar, Tamburini, Pichler, and Diana? I would wish certain wretched idolaters of Fortune to reflect upon these truths: destitute of both true prudence and true knowledge, they would like to appear prudent by dispensing certain maxims of Charity which cultivate and foster scandal.

V. These and others are the holy texts which the Fathers themselves allege as exemplars of a strong and vehement style when circumstances require it. Does Saint Augustine, one of the gentlest Fathers of the Church, not perhaps sometimes employ a sharp and strong style against Pelagius while he was still a Catholic reputed by all to be learned and pious? I say nothing of the style with which Saint Jerome refutes the opinions of John, Bishop of Jerusalem, and writes the two Apologies of the two Roman matrons Paula and Melania against the slanders of certain Catholic priests; nothing of the manners with which he writes against Rufinus, because perhaps someone would answer that the style of Saint Jerome is not so authoritative a rule that it ought to be imitated. Let us therefore take the meekest, mildest, and gentlest among all the Fathers, Saint Bernard, called the Mellifluous Doctor because of his great sweetness. With what style - now sharp, now witty, now vehement - does he not declaim against the abuses of monks, ecclesiastics, and the first ministers of the Church? The phrases with which Saint Prosper brings into view the errors of Cassian and the other religious of Marseilles, although they were not only Catholics but celebrated for piety and learning, are among the harshest and most biting. Will it perhaps be said that these Holy Fathers were violators of Charity? Let them say rather that men find it difficult to believe that what is troublesome to themselves is done from Charity (Guigo, *Meditations*, chapter 17).

VI. Strange indeed! These preachers of Charity toward the Casuists who published the lax propositions show themselves not at all moved by Charity toward all the Catholics who can remain deceived by the lax opinions, after which they run because of the ease of living which they find in them. But the paradox is stranger still if one reflects upon the writings and books printed by those who appeal to the Tribunal of Charity. The learned Jesuit Camargo observes how not a few Probabilists write in the harshest and least Christian manner against their adversaries; and then, when they see truth which is troublesome to them placed in the clear, they declaim: Where is Charity? They place this word Charity, supported by anything but truth, in the mouths of so many devout persons who, because they love that system which favors agreeable custom, display an incredible zeal toward the said authors. Experience is the most convincing proof. However many defamatory libels and unjust writings may issue against every other class of persons, not even one voice of this new Charity is heard. It makes itself heard only when it recognizes as struck that Probabilism which blunts the remorse of conscience by the invention of facilitating opinions. Where do all these refined arts of thinking come to an end? Nowhere else but at the purpose of freely printing without opposition and without reproach whatever pleases them most. For whenever it is contrary to Charity to disclose lax opinions and to expose them under that aspect, now derisive, now monstrous, which is best suited to arouse abhorrence of them, they have gained their purpose. I explain clearly. The style of men, on the one hand, varies according to the variety of temperaments. Truth, on the other hand, is hateful by its nature. The aforementioned maxim, that men find it difficult to believe that what is troublesome to themselves is done from Charity, is incontestable. However much attention and vigilance may be used in abstaining from every injury, Charity, according to them, never remains unharmed. Certain views under which truth is exposed wound prejudiced minds too deeply. Let the *History of Probabilism* be decisive testimony of this fact. All the adversaries who have written against it have not been able to oppose to it a single period less respectful toward those who alone cry out against it. This is a most certain fact. On the other side, these same men, in refuting the said *History*, use a style which I shall not say is contrary to Christian Charity, but repugnant to pagan humanity. This is not the place to demonstrate it. In passing I shall transcribe one or two of their texts. Let me be pardoned a small but opportune digression.

VII. The author of the one-sheet booklet entitled *The Complaints of the Justification* is said to be Father Sanvitale. But I suppose that, just as the book entitled *Justification*, so the one-sheet booklet called *Complaints* was composed by some little-cautious writer, and that afterward the report was spread that they were by Father Sanvitale in order to gain credit and authority for the booklets through the credit of so respectable a person. For I cannot bring myself to believe that Father Sanvitale, an octogenarian, prudent and pious, and distinguished by so many other titles, published libels filled with the most atrocious injuries. Let us recite one or two passages. In the *Complaints*, page 2, he writes thus: 'The author of the *Justification* judged it better to proceed by a shorter road and with a single reply to overthrow all that the Reverend Father Concina published in discredit of others. He has presented this writer, that is, Father Concina, to the public as fallen entirely from every merit of being believed and rendered incapable of obtaining credit as truthful, taking as his foundation what his two confrères, the Reverend Fathers Milante and Carrattino of the Sacred Order of Saint Dominic, wrote against him. He produced the censures of both upon certain books previously printed by the said Reverend Father Concina concerning the obligations of Regular Poverty. These censures are so tremendous, weighty, and cutting that they cast down and tear into pieces the literary reputation of

the author of those books and destroy in him every foundation of veracity.' Can the luminous devices of Casuistic Charity be depicted in more vivid colors? Let us recite another passage, in which, on page 3, he relates that Father Concina teaches the following proposition: 'ALL those Cloistered Religious who use private funds are imprudently and illiberally discredited as SONS OF PERDITION, forgetful of their own profession, infamous violators of poverty, and therefore living in danger of eternal damnation.' Father Concina establishes the contrary doctrine as the fundamental principle of the controversy. Here it is: 'It is also certain among ALL that religious profession is a contract enacted by solemn rite, in which the religious vows perpetual poverty - not just any poverty, but that which his own Rule prescribes. Every Rule, however, as we have seen, commands that poverty bounded by common life be observed. Hence the religious places all his goods, both present and future, under the dominion of the religious community, on this condition and pact: that the religious community may dispose of those goods, as its own, for the common use of all the religious, as it sees fit. And the religious community in turn binds itself by the same bond to furnish the religious food and clothing and all necessities. BUT JUST AS IN EVERY CONTRACT, WHEN ONE PARTY FAILS IN FULFILLING ITS OBLIGATION, THE OTHER TOO MUST NECESSARILY FAIL, SO LIKEWISE, IF THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY CEASES FROM ITS DUTY IN THE PROVISION OF FOOD AND CLOTHING, THERE IMMEDIATELY ARISES IN THE PROFESSED RELIGIOUS A RIGHT OF NATURE ANTECEDENT TO ANY CONTRACT, TO PROCURE FOOD AND CLOTHING BY HIS OWN PRIVATE FUNDS' (*Apostolic Monastic Discipline*, dissertation 1, chapter 1, page 84).

VIII. What does Your Reverence say? Does Father Concina condemn all the religious who use private funds? Father Sanvitale, or whoever wrote upon the authority of two grave and anti-Probabilist theologians, will answer that the authority of two theologians renders the narrative Probable. Let this Probabilist principle pass as conceded. But at present it is false according to each and every Probabilist, because the two theologians mentioned are adversaries of Father Concina and write in their own cause. Therefore, according to all the principles of Theology, the author of the *Complaints* is bound to retract all those things which, may it be permitted me so to call them, he printed as impostures upon the faith of the two theologians mentioned. I omit transcribing the injurious texts repugnant to honesty and truth, copied from Father Carrattino against Father Concina, with which the Reverend Father Lecchi goes about flowering his work. The whole is remitted to that Tribunal which cannot be deceived. I regret only that the Reverend Fathers Lecchi and Sanvitale, in exalting with so many praises Father Carrattino's *Cloistered Life*, in which there is defended for religious a licit private fund for food and clothing better than usual, for traveling, for making gifts, for recreation, for buying silver Watches and silver Boxes, and finally for gambling - oh, if the glorious Patriarch Saint Ignatius, who calls Monastic Poverty the bulwark of Discipline and who commanded so austere a Poverty in his most holy religious order, heard some of his sons now exalt with praises doctrines so lax and scandalous, what would he ever say? I hope that the courteous Reader will pardon me if I have gone somewhat out of the way in order to follow the wandering adversaries who, not knowing what to answer to the *History of Probabilism*, with little decorum to themselves take to reproaching the cause of Poverty, upon which perhaps one day the author of the *History* will write, to their little pleasure.

IX. Let us return to the Paradox of Charity. There are none who declaim more against murmurers than those who give scandal. The latter, in order to be able to sin with impunity and without reproach, would like all men to be without tongue and without mouth; they would like the whole

human race mute. Similarly, with the due difference, certain Probabilists, in order to be able to print any more benign opinion without censure, would wish either that no one write against them, or that one write in the skeptical fashion, probably on either side. To write in strong and decisive manners, as the importance of the matter requires, is repugnant to Charity in the judgment of these gentlemen. Strange indeed! For a century now, in the literary conflict, only the Probabilists have recourse to this luminous mantle of novel Charity. These alone cry that Charity is violated when Probabilist laxities are refuted. These alone cry Charity, Charity when they see the lax opinions of their Casuists refuted.

X. I compress the astonishing PARADOX into a few words. When the sick man at the height of his illness does not feel his malady, it is a sign that death is imminent. No wise man denies that malice and dissoluteness are at present in their fullness. And behold, amid this mortal infirmity of souls, there reigns a most fatal lethargy, so horrible a stupor, and, I shall thus say, so astonishing a frenzy that Charity is reputed injured when one cries aloud to awaken the sleepers from so profound a lethargy. It was judged the cruelest barbarity to prevent those under torment from lamenting and expressing the sensations of their pains. And behold, in our century, a species of similar tyranny renewed among many. It is not desired that, amid a universal carnage of souls, anyone cry out and make lamentations heard. Whoever writes and speaks loudly in proportion to the deafness and lethargy of those who listen is characterized as of a turbulent disposition and a tumultuous brain. The more the world grows old in malice and becomes deaf to the voices of Heaven, the more many Juniors desire that the voice be lowered and the style softened. If we oppose to them the strong and vehement style of the Holy Fathers, they answer that if the Augustines, the Jeromes, and the Bernards wrote in our times, the books *On Consideration* and the other invectives of Saint Bernard against the Ecclesiastical Ministers and against the laxity of the cloistered would without doubt be prohibited and proscribed. The more malice and the liberty of opining increase - let us repeat it another time - the less ought to be the liberty of correcting and reproving. Let us compare the writers of all the preceding centuries down to the epoch of Probabilism, and in all of them we shall recognize an Evangelical liberty in writing against lax opinions and against the corruptions of their times. After the epoch of Probabilism, in proportion as Christian Theology was relaxed, the liberty of writing against agreeable propositions decreased step by step. And because we now groan beneath the height of malice, we can scarcely breathe, open our mouth, or take up the pen without being censured either as imprudent, or as Rigorists, or as Jansenists, or as turbulent men devoid of Charity. I conclude this truly astonishing Paradox with a sentiment of Titus Livy. We have reached so fatal an extreme that we can bear neither our vices nor their remedies: 'We can endure neither our vices nor their remedies' (Decade 1, Book 1, preface). Yet let certain Probabilists cry out as much as they please, for men of God will never be lacking who, trampling upon both worldly hopes and worldly fears, will not cease to defend the sound Doctrine of Christian Morals.

Section IV — Paradox IV: Concerning Peace among Catholic Theologians

SECTION IV
PARADOX IV
Concerning peace among Catholic theologians

I. All those who peacefully savor earthly delights and rest comfortably amid conveniences continually dispense maxims of peace. They say that the world must be left as it was found. They fear that literary wars may disturb their pleasures and comforts, may impede and turn elsewhere the wind of favorable fortune. They desire peacefully to collect gifts, contributions, and honoraria, and to maintain themselves in the peaceable possession of all their rights founded upon abuses and corruptions. All these men exclaim: Peace, peace. And in order to procure this peace at every cost, they seek to subject him who defends error and him who protects truth to the same condition. That, in capricious questions not pertaining to eternal salvation, an effort be made to restrain the excessive curiosity of over-exuberant intellects is an excellent thing; that those to whom it does not belong to judge the merits impose a truce and suspension of arms until, at an opportune time and under the due conditions, the truth can be made clear, is well. But that those who ought to promote and seek the examination of theological disputes should employ all possible means so that truth remain confused with error, sound doctrine with laxities - upon which either Paradise or Hell depends - this is a very extravagant PARADOX. With an astute policy these men promote a peace which consists in a full liberty to propagate without contradiction every lax opinion whatsoever. When there is no one to contradict lax propositions, everyone will print his capricious doctrines with impunity. But let us hear the discourses of these refined politicians.

II. Is it not, they say, a scandalous thing to see so many Catholics, and so many religious themselves, in continual literary wars, in disputes and quarrels which scandalize heretics, disturb Catholics, and go on imperceptibly working the ruin of the Church? This is the language of a worldly Policy wholly ignorant of the ways by which the Christian Church was planted and increased. Without doubt, we all ought to desire a perfect concord and a reciprocal peace which, with the bonds of holy Charity, binds all our hearts both among ourselves and with God. And all will be obliged to cooperate in that holy concord which is the splendid and principal device of the Christian profession, according to the teaching of Saint Paul: 'Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no schisms among you; but that you be perfect in the same mind and in the same judgment' (1 Corinthians 1). But upon the supposition that vice makes war upon virtue and falsehood upon truth, then the suggestion of peace is a command to yield the field to falsehood and to give vice a full victory. God himself attests to us that the life of man upon earth is warfare, that vice will combat virtue and falsehood will fight against truth: 'Evil is against good, and death against life; so also is the sinner against the just. And thus consider all the works of the Most High: two against two, and one against one' (Ecclesiasticus 33).

III. If our forefathers, brave champions of the Christian Religion, had practiced the aforementioned maxim of peace, what would have become of the dogmas of our Faith and the commandments of holy Morals? The scandal of dissensions and disputes is inevitable: 'It is necessary that scandals come' (Matthew 18). Saints Bernard and Thomas, and commonly the others, teach with Saint Gregory: 'It is

better that scandal arise than that truth be abandoned' (*Homily 7 on Ezekiel*). This is the language of the Fathers founded upon Holy Scripture. The promoters of benign propositions and the supporters of worldly policy suggest an idle and worldly peace, a peace which has for its foundation the toleration of abuses, corruptions, and falsehoods; whereas the peace which God commands us in Scripture is a peace inseparable from truth: 'Love only truth and peace' (Zechariah 8:19). The peace of which modern politicians speak pressed bitter tears from the eyes of holy David: 'I was jealous of the wicked when I saw the peace of sinners' (Psalm 72:3). Jeremiah declaims against the mask of this false peace: 'From the prophet even to the priest, all practice deceit ... saying, Peace, peace; and there was no peace' (chapter 6). This human peace is more bitter than war, Ezekiel adds: 'Behold, in peace is my bitterness most bitter' (chapter 38). Finally Jesus Christ himself commands us to wield the sword of truth against this lying peace: 'Do not think that I came to send peace upon earth. I came not to send peace, but the sword' (Matthew 10:34). I could report innumerable texts of the Fathers. But for now I shall report only one against this paradox of false peace, from Saint Gregory Nazianzen: 'Nor should anyone suspect that I think every peace is to be loved and embraced. For I have clearly understood that, just as there is a certain excellent dissension, so there is a certain most pernicious concord. For a contention undertaken for the cause of piety is better than a vicious concord' (Oration 12).

IV. That which each person must examine with the greatest vigilance and attention in these literary wars, before entering into conflict, is to explore the intention, the end, and the necessity of taking up the pen. If the spirit of emulation, of party, and the vanity of causing one's own opinion to prevail are the motives which stimulate the contest, in that case there is much reason to fear that the disputants are among those carnal men described by Saint Paul: 'For while there is jealousy and contention among you, are you not carnal and walking according to man?' (1 Corinthians 3). To walk amid so many most grave dangers and insidious enemies, the more formidable the more hidden they are, it is first necessary to make very certain that one is defending the cause of truth, that one has truth upon one's side. Once this first and most important point has been secured, it is easy to purify the intentions and regulate the mind. Without doubt, in the very defense of truth the malign and insidious spirit of vengeance, pride, and hatred can insinuate and hide itself; but it is also true that it can be both discovered and conquered with great ease if those means of fervent prayers and sincere humility which God commands us are practiced. His spirit strengthened with these heavenly aids, let him enter the arena with courage. On the contrary, those who defend the cause of falsehood certainly go astray. And these, not those who defend truth, are the supporters of schisms and discords. Therefore let the defenders of truth fear nothing, but let them labor with constancy and magnanimity in its defense, impressing upon their minds the holy divine maxim of Esdras: 'Truth is great and stronger than all. Truth remains and grows strong forever, and lives forever and ever. With her there is no accepting of persons or making of differences; but she does what is just to all, turning away from everything unjust and wicked. Blessed be the God of truth.... And all the people cried out and said: Great is truth, and it prevails' (3 Esdras 4).

V. I wished to premise these four Paradoxes as so many preambles to the Reflections upon the works of the Reverend Fathers Bovio and Lecchi. On another occasion we shall give still other, more surprising Paradoxes concerning Probabilism, when an opportune occasion presents itself. For now let this suffice.

Paradox V — Upon the Enigma of the Siglum, or Rather the Etc.

PARADOX V

Upon the Enigma of the Siglum, or Rather the Etc.

Interpreted with singular observations by the Reverend Father Domenico Mansi of the Congregation of the Mother of God, in a letter addressed to Father Concina

I. At the opportune time in which I had just put an end to the four preceding Probabilist Paradoxes, there came into my hands a letter of the Reverend Father Domenico Mansi of the Congregation of the Mother of God, addressed to Father Concina. In it is contained material most suitable for a Casuistic Paradox as bizarre as it is new and surprising. In it the Reverend Father Mansi assumes the device of the PROBABILIST, with an *although* before it, thus terminating the letter: 'Farewell, Reverend Father, and I wish you to use me, although a PROBABILIST, not as an adversary but as a friend.' Beneath this specious figure of a Probabilist he offers us his learned critical observations upon the Mysterious Casuistic Siglum, or rather Etc. His thoughts are pleasant and festive; therefore it is necessary to represent them in a corresponding manner, according to the teaching of Tertullian: 'It accords with truth to laugh, because she is joyful, and to sport with her rivals, because she is secure' (*Against the Valentinians*, chapter 6).

II. Father Probabilist relates that last year the late Father Niccolò Ghezzi, a distinguished ornament of the illustrious Society of Jesus, sent him the book of his *Dialogues* against the *History of Probabilism* so that he might have it printed in Lucca. Here are the words of the letter: 'Last year Father Niccolò Ghezzi, a distinguished ornament of the Society of Jesus, sent me the book of *Dialogues* composed by him against your *History*, to be printed by the presses of Lucca.' These *Dialogues* of Father Ghezzi are preceded by a NOTICE to the Reader. The author of the book entitled *Theological Examination*, etc., heard from a most illustrious man of letters and of the highest authority that this Notice was perhaps the production of Father Mansi. Joined to this testimony, the incontestable fact confessed by our Probabilist himself, that he had undertaken to have the said *Dialogues* printed, rendered, as everyone sees, most prudent the suspicion expressed by the author of the *Examination*, etc., with the following most cautious reservations: 'The work of the Reverend Father Niccolò Ghezzi is preceded by a Notice produced by a friend of his. Truly the style is different, and the manners are different from those of the *Dialogues*. THEY SAY that the author of this Notice is the Reverend Father Mansi, a religious of the Congregation of the Mother of God. Whether this is true, I certainly do not know. I know well that this most illustrious man of letters is a friend of Father Ghezzi, and that he is precisely the one who caused the aforementioned work of his to be printed in Lucca. This certain and incontestable fact seems to leave no room to doubt even the former.'

III. The Reverend Father Mansi denies ever having read this Notice either after or before its printing: 'I never read it, either before it was printed or afterward when printed.' For my part, I would consider a man little honest and too discourteous who did not give credence to this simple assertion of Father Mansi. But the point is that Father Mansi appears in the dispute beneath the ensign of a Probabilist, and as a Probabilist interposes the offer of an oath with which to confirm his statement: 'Concerning the truth of this, I am prepared to offer myself as guarantor even with the sacred obligation of an oath.' I now invite both the Reverend Father Mansi and all unprejudiced wise men to judge whether

credence ought to be given to the oath of a Probabilist, as a Probabilist, in view of the doctrine which the Probabilists teach concerning oaths. I shall do nothing other than transcribe certain Rules prescribed by the celebrated Probabilist Father Ferdinando Castro Palao concerning amphibological oaths.

In volume 3, treatise 14, disputation 1, point 7, page 11 and following, he establishes as the first universal rule that whenever there is an honest motive for concealing the truth, one may swear to what is false; that is, by means of an amphibological oath one may deny the truth of the fact: 'For if some honorable cause for concealing the truth intervenes, such as if concealment were fitting to protect your safety or that of your family, your honor, or your property; or if it were fitting not to assent to one questioning unjustly, you commit no fault if you swear thus amphibologically' (no. 4). He immediately adds that such an oath is licit even though it was not requested: 'This holds true even if, not having been asked, you swear, but offer yourself to swear, provided that an honest cause for swearing and concealing the truth intervenes.' Can there be a more honest reason for Father Mansi than shame at appearing the author of so bad a Notice?

IV. Having established this first universal maxim, the great Probabilist Castro Palao proceeds to warn that a certain persuasion is not necessary, but that a merely probable motive for not being bound to disclose the fact suffices in order to cover perjury with Casuistic Amphibology: 'When questioned concerning an offense which, at least under a probable opinion, he is not bound to disclose, whether because it is not of such a kind that reparation must be made, or because grave harm to himself would result from the disclosure, he will be able to deny that he committed it, mentally adding: in prison, or in order to tell it.'

V. After these two universal rules he descends to apply them to particular cases, of which, from the many, I shall transcribe two or three. He teaches spouses that they may deny under oath the promise made when there is a probable opinion that they are not bound by the promise: 'When asked whether he promised marriage, from whose obligation he is free according to a Probable Opinion, he will be able to SWEAR that he did not promise, mentally adding: so as to be bound' (no. 5). This is a very accommodating invention for those spouses who, under the mantle of a promise, have courted for entire years.

VI. He teaches smugglers: 'One PROBABLY exempt from payment of the customs duty will be able to swear that he does not carry such and such a thing, although he carries it, mentally adding: so that he ought to pay the customs duty.' I do not know whether such doctrine is consonant with the right which princes have to exact customs duties.

VII. To merchants who cannot obtain from buyers the just price of their goods, he suggests employing perjury, or rather the equivocal oath, by which they affirm a falsehood, that the merchandise costs them so much, although it is not true, mentally joining to the merchandise which they sell another merchandise which they have at home: 'Merchants who cannot obtain the just price from buyers unless they SWEAR that their merchandise costs them so much or so much, when in fact it does not, may indeed swear that it costs them so much, mentally adding: all expenses being computed; or that it costs them so much, mentally adding: together with another merchandise which they have at home or bought elsewhere.' Saint John Chrysostom, or whoever is the author of the *Imperfect Work*, was ignorant of this doctrine when he wrote: 'This one swears that it is not worth so much. That one swears that it is worth more. And thus a merchant cannot be without perjury'

(*Homily 44 on Matthew*). That is not true, Father Castro Palao replies, when the merchant intends to unite with the merchandise which he sells also the merchandise which he has at home or in the warehouse at Seville. He adduces a dozen other similar perjuries by which to conceal thefts, adulteries, and any fact whatsoever, which I pass over for brevity.

VIII. The doctrine which the learned Probabilist expounds after sixteen amphibological oaths is more admirable and more incredible. He therefore concludes thus: Although the questioner expressly commanded that every equivocation, amphibology, and restriction be excluded and that the truth be sincerely confessed without any equivocation, as the Holy Gospel commands, nevertheless you will be able to use the equivocal oath by which to deny the truth. And he warns that there is no proposition in the world so strict and circumstantiated that it does not leave room for an equivocation, and consequently for amphibological perjury: 'Even if the one questioning should wish to exclude every equivocation, and beyond the oath concerning the fact should ask for an oath against calumny, and should require an oath of speaking the truth SINCERELY without any equivocation, you will still be able to swear with an amphibological oath and with a restriction made; because you may mentally add that you will swear without an unjust equivocation. For no proposition can be so narrowly confined THAT YOU CANNOT HAVE SOME RESTRICTION IN MIND' (page 12).

IX. Everyone will say that here is the *non plus ultra* of Probabilism in this kind. And yet there is still more. To have ready at every encounter, and on the instant, an opportune equivocation is easy for acute Probabilists practiced in their secrets; it is not so easy for Christians educated in the maxims of Evangelical sincerity. For these poor, ignorant, and simple persons, will there perhaps not be in all Probabilism an obvious and easy manner of concealing the truth even though they do not have ready the equivocation with which to cover the perjury, or rather the denial of truth? Will there be no remedy? Probabilism would not be Probabilism if it did not have its opportune sweet lenitives for every condition of persons. For these ignorant and simple persons it suffices that they intend to deny the truth under oath beneath one of those mental restrictions invented and approved by the learned Junior Probabilists. Here is Father Castro Palao's conclusion: 'Concerning the things said above, it is especially to be noted that one using any of the aforementioned amphibologies must know at least in general that he can cover the truth without a lie. IT IS NOT, HOWEVER, NECESSARY TO KNOW IN PARTICULAR THE MANNER IN WHICH IT MUST BE COVERED. Therefore, if he intends to swear in that sense which a very learned man knows to be true and knows can be found to be true, this will suffice to excuse PERJURY.' In his commentaries upon proposition 27 of Innocent XI, Father Domenico Viva offers the ignorant common people an easier means of two kinds of knowledge, one for saying and the other for not saying, which in good language signifies that the one kind of knowledge serves for lying without equivocation and the other for disclosing the truth without reserve: 'When, however, a CONVENIENT equivocation or external restriction does not occur, if the cause is grave, Peasants can, by the use of double knowledge readily at hand, conceal the truth, not with the intention of deceiving but merely by permitting deception.' Father Castro Palao cites in approval of his doctrine now Sánchez, Rebello, Bonacina, and Lessius, and now Suárez, Sayrus, and other most grave Probabilists.

X. Let us transcribe some other fine manners of deceiving the public faith, invented by that other distinguished Probabilist, Father Tomás Sánchez. By the subtraction of an I, he frees perjury from grave sin: 'Similarly, to say "I burn," after removing the I from "I swear," when he truly burns

nothing, would be no more than a venial lie' (*On the Decalogue*, book 3, chapter 6, no. 3). Take also this general aphorism: 'If anyone ... swears that he did not do something which in fact he did, understanding inwardly something else which he did not do, or another day different from that on which he did it, or any other true addition, he does not really lie, nor is he perjured ... indeed this is exceedingly useful for concealing many things.... Likewise it will be permissible to answer that he did not kill Peter, understanding another of the same name, or even the same Peter, understanding before he was born' (nos. 15 and 16). If I wished to relate the other little doctrines upon this point of the Tamburinis, the Escobars, and so many other Probabilists, I would form a little volume from them. But those reported suffice for our purpose.

XI. Let the Reverend Father Mansi now join together the profession of Probabilist which he displays in his letter and the reported doctrines concerning oaths taught by his Probabilists; and then let him judge, let the public judge, what credence could be given to that oath which he offers in his letter as a Probabilist. From this let Father Mansi learn how cautious Probabilists ought to be in writing. If Your Reverence, in unfurling the banner of Probabilist, had had before your eyes the doctrine which the Probabilists teach concerning Oaths, perhaps you would not have ended your letter with that epiphonema, 'And use me, although a Probabilist, not as an adversary,' etc.; this you could have kept within your pen without detriment to either your gravity or your prudence. And in that case you would not have had the displeasure of seeing exposed to the public the scandalous doctrines of your Probabilists, doctrines wholly similar to those of the Priscillianists, doctrines which break all commerce, every society, and every human correspondence. If Father Mansi, as Father Mansi, had offered his oath, he would have encountered full credence among all; but having offered the oath as a Probabilist, he will find no wise man practiced in Probabilist doctrines who will accept such an oath. The Reverend Father Mansi is requested to read, in place of his Probabilists, two Authors. The first is a Pagan, namely Cicero, in book 3 of *On Duties*, chapter 29, no. 72, where in the following text he will find all the doctrines of his Probabilism condemned: 'Those ten whom Hannibal, after the battle of Cannae, sent under oath to the Senate, on the condition that they would return to the camp of which the Carthaginians had taken possession unless they obtained their request concerning the redemption of the captives.... Polybius ... writes that of the ten most noble men who were then sent, nine returned when the request was not obtained from the Senate; one of the ten, who shortly after leaving the camp had returned as if he had forgotten something, remained at Rome. For by returning to the camp he interpreted himself as released from his oath. Wrongly: for deceit aggravates, not dissolves, perjury. It was therefore a foolish cleverness perversely imitating prudence. And so the Senate decreed that that crafty and cunning old fellow should be taken to Hannibal.' If Father Mansi had meditated upon all these things, I am certain either that he would not have offered the oath or that he would not have unfurled the banner of Probabilist for such a purpose, with an *although* before it.

XII. The second Author whom I suggest that you read is a Heretic, supposing you are provided with the necessary license. The suggestion will serve you for a most useful digression, since I am concerned to offer some Christian instruction for sound doctrine even in contentious books. The Heretic is Jean de La Placette, who printed an entire little volume upon oaths. Truths and good things are taken even from the enemies of the true Religion. Now in book 1, chapter 9, he examines the doctrine of those Casuists who maintain that the use of an oath is licit even to confirm an equivocal proposition in which the truth is concealed, because they say that the oath follows the nature of the

proposition which it confirms. If that proposition is equivocal in an opportune manner according to the rules of external equivocations, it contains no lie; therefore it can be confirmed by an oath. La Placette reasons thus concerning such a doctrine: 'For the present I do not wish to dispute whether to confirm an equivocal proposition with an oath is perjury, but whether it is a sin. For in the dispute which we have on this subject with the Jesuits and most of the new Casuists, it is not a question of knowing whether the use of equivocations is perjury, but only of knowing whether it is a sin.' He proves that it is a sin thus: Certainly anyone sins who causes a Sacred and Religious action, such as an oath, to serve an end directly opposed to that for which God instituted that action. This is an incontestable proposition. The true and sole end for which God instituted the oath is the manifestation and confirmation of important and necessary truths which must be known. He proves this second proposition with two texts of Scripture: 'If anyone entrusts to his neighbor an ass, an ox, a sheep, or any beast for safekeeping, and it dies, or is injured, or is taken by enemies, and no one has seen this, there shall be an oath between them that he did not put forth his hand to his neighbor's property; and the owner shall accept the oath, and he shall not be compelled to make restitution' (Exodus 22). The second is from Saint Paul: 'For men swear by one greater than themselves, and an oath for confirmation is the end of all their controversy' (Hebrews 6). A third may be added from Jeremiah: 'And you shall swear: The Lord lives, in truth,' etc. (chapter 4).

He confirms this proposition with the authority of Saint Thomas and of all the Theologians; and it is no less certain and evident than the first. From this he argues thus. Is not the sole end of equivocations to conceal the truth? Is there anything more opposed to the manifestation of truth than the concealment of that same truth? Therefore there is nothing more opposed to the sole end for which the oath was instituted by God than the use of the oath in confirmation of equivocal assertions. It is a sin to make a sacred and religious action, such as the oath, serve an end directly opposed to that for which it was instituted by God. Therefore it is evident that the use of an oath to confirm equivocal propositions is a sin. Direct truths and reflex truths can be distinguished, but a solid and meaningful reply will never be given. For it can never be defended that it is not a sacrilegious abuse of the Holy name of God to swear in order to conceal, not to manifest, the truth; to swear in order to persuade men not of truth but of falsehood and error. Is it not true that the oath causes those who hear it to pass from a state of doubt, uncertainty, and suspension to a state of persuasion, but of false and erroneous persuasion? Nor is it of any value to say that he who swears does not force or drive into error and falsehood those to whom he swears, but that through their own inadvertence they fall of themselves into error. These little distinctions are too weak to elude truths so luminous. If there is passive deception in him who hears, active deception must precede it in him who speaks. It will be said that in him who speaks there precedes a permissive cause of the passive deception. These and other similar bizarre things can be said, but the horrid abuse of the Most Holy name of God in confirming equivocal assertions, that is, the concealment of truth by a holy oath, can never be denied. For 'by whatever artifice of words anyone swears, God nevertheless, who is the witness of conscience, takes it as he to whom the oath is made understands it' (canon *Quacumque*, 22, question 5). This doctrine is so solid that not even the Reverend Father Mansi with a thousand of his Etceteras will be able to elude or obscure it. I wished to report it as a profitable digression so that the Christian Reader, even while reading the dispute raised by Father Mansi over an Etc., may learn some principle of sound doctrine against the falsehoods of certain Casuists who have rendered wholly useless the employment of most sacred oaths. The world is filled with perjuries, and no one claims to

be a perjurer, because everyone has his formula of swearing copied from some Casuist. Do we marvel if we see contracts, agreements, and confederations authenticated with the most solemn and express oaths violated and broken? Let us not advance further, I pray, into so odious and formidable a subject, for it is now time to bring the digression to an end.

XIII. Let Father Mansi therefore take comfort that I wish to believe both his oaths and his simple assertions. I wish to suppose that the suspicion of the author of the *Examination* is false; no wise man, however, will be able to deny that it was well founded, prudent, and set forth with every caution. Let Father Mansi answer a little. Upon what foundation does he ascribe the *Theological Examination* to Father Concina? How would he prove such a fact? Because he heard it related? The author of the *Examination* also heard it related that the Notice was by Father Mansi. And in addition he knew with certainty that Father Mansi had confederated himself with the Probabilists, serving them as Agent and Executor for printing their books in Lucca against the *History of Probabilism*. This fact is confessed by our Reverend Father Probabilist: 'Father Niccolò Ghezzi sent me the book of *Dialogues* to be printed by the presses of Lucca; I examined it, and since I found it learned and moderate ... I judged that it should be approved and printed.' With all these vehement conjectures, the author of the *Examination* contents himself with a 'They say that the Notice is by Father Mansi.' And without so many proofs, he absolutely makes Father Concina the author of the *Theological Examination* at the very time when he complains of having been put forward as author of the Notice? Can a more amusing thing be heard?

XIV. Before passing further, it is fitting to make a brief observation upon the two praises of learned and moderate attributed by the Reverend Father Mansi to Father Ghezzi's book. And to begin with the first: is a book called learned in which it is established as a maxim not to care for truth, but for Probability? In which nothing doctrinal breathes forth other than some rancid retortions copied from Father La Croix and other Probabilists? In which the conversations of Cleander and Eudoxus, condemned by the Holy Office, are produced as the most powerful book against Jansenism? In which the falsity of facts, the weakness of reasoning, and the imprudent fables of introducing his confrères into the parlor of nuns to speak of Morals appear everywhere, and in which, finally, fallacies and sophisms are so frequent that they form the greater part of the book? A book is proclaimed moderate in which Father Concina is represented to the world as a disciple of Calvin, Quesnel, Arnauld, and Pascal, as a copyist of the *Provincial Letters* and other Jansenist books? In which, finally, the infamous brand of Pascalist and Arnauldist is cast in his face in almost every Dialogue? This is the book which Father Probabilist, in the character of Censor of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal, approved as a learned and moderate book, and whose printing, as a confederate of the Probabilists, he procured. And these are the approvers of Evangelical Morals?

XV. Given these incontestable facts - that Father Mansi allied himself with Father Concina's adversaries in procuring the printing of their books and in weaving praises of the most monstrous facts confessed by the same Reverend Father Mansi in this letter of his - I ask whether the author who undertook to refute Father Ghezzi's book did not with every reason indicate the scandalous doctrines contained in Mansi's book? Who will ever be able to deny that this Reverend Father Probabilist acquired for himself the just censures, so that it could rightly be said of him: 'You brought yourself into it; all of it must be eaten by you'? If the blows of Father Ghezzi, the immediate aggressor, were repelled, reason required that some just offense also be raised against him who

assisted in the printing of his book, since 'equal shall be the portion of him who went down to battle and of him who remained with the baggage' (1 Kings 30:24). Except that the author of the *Examination*, not in order to punish Father Mansi's ill-advised league with the adversaries of the *History of Probabilism*, but in order to preserve the Christian people from the pernicious doctrine contained in his book upon the reserved Cases of Lucca, transcribed one monstrous proposition and indicated others. Thus, so far as the order of the dispute is concerned, the wrong of Father Probabilist is most evident. Let us now enter upon the merits.

XVI. Among all the bizarre inventions and playful devices found and practiced by the Probabilists in order to cover in some manner the horror of the laxities of their Casuists, the subterfuge to which the Reverend Father Mansi has taken himself surpasses them all and is as incredible as it is surprising, as ridiculous as it is curious. In his aforementioned letter, with unheard-of frankness, he makes use of two *etceteras* - I write *etcetera* without abbreviation, for a full understanding of the fact - and inserts them at will where he believes they can temper the scandal of his doctrine. Up to this point there is no harm; indeed, for the same strong reason he could have inserted entire words into his text, so that the enormous error of which he is accused would effectively have been retracted. The evil is that he charges the author of the *Theological Examination* with having omitted an Etcetera when transcribing his text in which such an error is enclosed, and claims that through such an omission the text remains truncated and disguised under another meaning. If this were true, the author of the *Examination* would be guilty of imposture; but since it is most evidently false, this charge will have to be ascribed solely to Father Mansi. Here is the text which the author of the *Examination* transcribed from Father Mansi's book with the whole Etcetera and with all the commas, without the omission of a single stroke: 'Moreover, every indecent act attempted with nuns, provided that it reaches mortal sin, is bound by the Reservation. But as indecent acts are understood all those which are unbecoming and seriously repugnant to the honor and state of the person. Yet with respect to a Nun, words, looks, etc., concerning the PRIVATE PARTS, kisses, embraces, TOUCHING OF THE BREASTS, committed by persons of different sex, are seriously unbecoming WHEN THEY ARE NOT MADE HONORABLE EITHER BY THE CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY OR BY THE TITLE OF FRIENDSHIP; which is difficult with Nuns, etc.' This is the Text transcribed from Father Mansi's book entitled *Treatise on Cases and Excommunications Reserved to Bishops, etc.*, by the author Giovanni Domenico Mansi of the Congregation of the Mother of God, Lucca, 1724, question 2, case 12, page 233, no. 9. It must be noted here that Father Mansi caused this Treatise of his to be reprinted in the year 1739; and although he corrected some of the falsehoods found in the aforementioned first edition of 1724, nevertheless he left the scandalous doctrine reported above intact, as it lies in that very first edition.

Now, in order to understand the first imposture, let it be observed that our Father Probabilist, in order to charge the author of the *Examination* with the omission of the Etcetera, alters the text of his own book and begins to transcribe it in this letter of his after the first Etcetera, in this fashion: 'Touching of the private parts, kisses, embraces, when,' although the legitimate text of Father Mansi is this: 'Touching, looks, etc., concerning the Private Parts,' with that which follows in the text. Everyone sees well that the Etcetera placed in its legitimate location, if it signifies anything, certainly signifies lax and foul things. Therefore the Reverend Father Mansi truncates the text reported by him because he is ashamed now to appear the teacher of a doctrine printed and reprinted and otherwise too guilty and scandalous. Hence he proceeds falsely to reproach the author of the *Examination* with

the omission of an Etcetera which, even if he had omitted it, would have done Father Mansi a great favor; for the first Etcetera in its true location signifies indecent things. The last, placed after these words, 'which is difficult with Nuns, etc.,' if it expresses anything, signifies that with women of the world it will be easy. Finally he adds 'They are reserved, etc.,' which certainly is not in his book.

XVII. I now beg the public to compare the text just transcribed by me in the Reverend Father Mansi's book, both the first and the second edition; and if it is not exact, sincere, and entire; if the famous Etcetera was not placed by the author of the *Examination* in the very location in which Father Mansi placed it in his book; if, finally, Father Mansi does not report his own text altered in this letter of his, let the author of the *Examination* be condemned as guilty of imposture. But if it is sincere and entire, as it incontestably is, let each person judge the honesty and good faith of the Reverend Father Mansi. You, wise Reader, will feel yourself moved in reading such things. But from this learn what it means to dispute with Probabilists; reflect what a charming thing Probabilism is according to such delightful thoughts. Conclude how far our Probabilist adversaries are from cavils, when for the defense of their causes they climb up over Etceteras, Etceteras.

XVIII. Father Mansi himself confesses that in the text reported not a word is missing, nor is any added. How then does he defend so scandalous a doctrine? Hear him: 'And from these words of yours you infer and ascribe to my reasons a doctrine plainly absurd, new, and to your own Arauxo, Zanardi, and Sousa - a little more indulgent in these matters - unheard-of and pernicious' - where do the Arauxos, Zanardis, and Sousas teach so horrendous a doctrine? Where are the texts? And without alleging the texts are such enormous errors imputed? Let us continue the text: 'Namely, that touching the private parts and breasts of women by the wantonness of men will be innocent and indifferent if made honorable by the custom of the country? But, Father Concina, I ask, how could this ever come into your mind about me?' Truly, so monstrous a doctrine would never have come into the mind of any man furnished with reason if it were not read in print, and what is more, reprinted, in the cited Treatise of the Reverend Father Domenico Mansi. But is it then true that this doctrine is printed and reprinted in the cited Treatise

and reprinted in Father Mansi's book? The public has already been invited above to read the cited Treatise in both its first and second editions; and it is now added that Father Mansi himself confesses it in this letter of his, page 5: 'You affirm that you understood this from my words; for you say that after those words, "Touching of the private parts, kisses, embraces, touching of the breasts are criminal," I immediately added, "unless they are rendered honorable by the custom of the country." You did indeed write that.' But if you certainly wrote it, why do you complain? Why groan? Because, in order to make the proposition true in some good sense, it is enough that the clause should be capable of being applied in a sound sense to some of the words: 'Unless they are rendered honorable, it was sufficient for me, for the truth of those words, if even some of those things, though not all, could be rendered honorable by the custom of the country.' This is to wish to render oneself ridiculous even among Grammarians. That 'unless they are rendered honorable either by the custom of the country or by the title of friendship' governs, not one more than another, but all the preceding words of the text equally, as is manifest to anyone of sound mind. 'Who indeed,' Father Mansi continues in his Letter, 'could have thought me of so gross an understanding that I would enumerate touching of the private parts and breasts among signs of friendship?' I reply that no one would have thought you of so gross an understanding if you had not twice printed such a doctrine.

You attempt by the force of conjectures to render incredible that which your words openly manifest. You can indeed attest that it was not your intention to assert what your words signify. But the question now concerns, not your intention, but the obvious meaning of your book. Permit me, however, the courteous liberty of replying a little more directly to this argument of yours from the improbability of writing what you actually wrote. You therefore argue thus: 'Who will think me of so obtuse a mind that I would justify touching of the breasts by the title of friendship?' Besides having told you that no one would ever have imagined this if you had not written it clearly, I add that the defense made in this letter of yours is more improbable, more incredible, than your scandalous opinion. Yes, most esteemed Father, it is more incredible that a reasonable man should attempt to make the public believe that, in the place where you set it, an *etcetera* signifies 'for the sake of administering treatment,' than is the error which is read all too visibly in your book. This argument of yours from improbability and incredibility compels me to tell you that you gentlemen Probabilists teach incredible things, and then, when they are exposed in their monstrous appearance, you yourselves cry out in your defense that they are incredible.

Tell me a little: is it incredible that a Christian man should teach it to be a point of faith that 'to tickle the cheeks and to touch the breasts of nuns' are indifferent acts? Is it credible that a Christian theologian should dare to prove so monstrous an absurdity from the texts of the Holy Gospel? Yet the Reverend Father Theologian writes in his *Judgment*, page 4: 'Now the proposed doctrine concerning the intrinsic indifference of touchings of this kind is so certain that it seems it cannot be denied without danger of error in faith. For it is evident, first, from Sacred Scripture in many places. For example, from the final chapter of Mark: "They shall lay their hands upon the sick," etc. "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests ... anointing him," etc.' Is so sacrilegious an abuse of the holy texts to prove licit the touching of the breasts of sacred Virgins credible? Is it credible that, to prove similar touchings, the case of Saint Agatha should be produced, who is depicted holding her severed breast in her hand? Yet the Reverend Father Theologian advances precisely this in his other golden little work; and these golden little works are reprinted in your Lucca by your confederate Probabilists. How many other things do you gentlemen Probabilists teach - the wise and learned always excepted - which appear incredible? Thus your argument drawn from the topic of improbability is a new weapon against you. It is incredible, I too confess once more, that you printed the doctrine reported above; but the fact that you printed it and reprinted it is infallible.

Was it credible that you printed that doctrine in the first edition of your book? 'Indeed, he does not even sin.' Yet it is a certain fact that it is read in that first edition of yours. I do not wish to press you further.

XIX. It is now time for us to enter upon the Paradox, in one respect the most ridiculous and puerile, and in another the most extravagant, that has ever been heard. At last the Reverend Father Mansi, overcome by the evidence of the Text, confesses that the obvious and literal meaning of his Text is such as we have said. But in order to make known to the public that he is not of gross understanding, he informs the public that in his text there is an *etcetera*, abbreviated thus: *etc.*, called by him in Latin a *siglum*. He accuses the author of the *Theological Examination* of having omitted this Siglum when copying his text. Thus he writes in this letter of his, page 6: 'You cut off that Siglum; whether this was done by evil design or by chance I do not discuss. This is certain: by its being cut off, you made your accusation, which that compendious sign plainly weakened, at least stronger in appearance.'

First, this is an imposture far too humiliating to Father Mansi, because the Siglum is read in the text printed in the *Examination*, page 11: 'Touching, looks, etc., of the parts.' Let the text copied in the *Theological Examination* be compared with Father Mansi's original text, and in both, in the same place, there will be found a most beautiful *etcetera* abbreviated thus: *etc.* The final *etc.*, after the last words, 'which is difficult with nuns, etc.,' if it expresses anything, as has been said, signifies that the touchings can easily be rendered honorable with other women.

XX. I am certain that all those who read such things will either laugh their jaws off or, rather, be kindled with indignation. What! they will say, over an *etc.* there is litigation, dispute, and contention? What does it matter whether that *etc.* is there or not? What does it matter? Hear and be astonished. To this single *etc.* the Reverend Father Mansi takes refuge. In this *etc.* he has placed his victory; in this *etc.*, in this Siglum, he has lodged his triumph. Do you perhaps believe that only among the Chinese and the Egyptians does the mere figure of a single character signify many words? Among us Europeans too this *etc.* signifies important things according to the exigency of the matter. In our case this *etc.*, this Siglum, signifies FOR THE SAKE OF ADMINISTERING TREATMENT. Go now, O Caramuel, O Diana, O Castro Palao, O Leander, O Escobar, O Sánchez, O Tamburini, and all you other Probabilists, for all together you were not capable of inventing a mental restriction like this one of the *etcetera*, abbreviated as *etc.* and called in Latin a Siglum. The mental restriction here is astonishing, and the Paradox is prodigious. Father Sánchez the Probabilist, by subtracting the letter *j* from the verb *juro*, 'I swear,' turns it into the verb *uro*, 'I burn,' which signifies something wholly different. But to claim to indicate 'for the sake of administering treatment' by an *etc.* is something which, I believe, could never have come into the head of anyone except Father Probabilist.

Here are the words of the Reverend Father Mansi's Letter: 'After these words I added the sign of abbreviation *etc.*, in order to intimate that there could be other causes capable of rendering those touchings honorable, such as FOR THE SAKE OF ADMINISTERING TREATMENT. Since these causes were very well known, I judged that they should not indeed be expressed, but indicated by placing that SIGLUM *etc.* Indeed, I did not set down this compendious sign by chance, but deliberately, so that it might signify something which at that time I judged ought to be left unspoken as sufficiently known in itself.' He sincerely confesses that he left unspoken, that he kept within his pen, the words 'for the sake of administering treatment,' because he supposed them to be things sufficiently known, indicated and manifested in the Siglum, that is, in the abbreviation *etc.* But that which renders this Casuistic Paradox still more prodigious is that the Siglum, or *etc.*, is placed among these words: 'But with regard to nuns, touchings, looks, etc., of the private parts are gravely unbecoming.' If this miraculous Siglum among the words reported above signified anything, it would signify something wholly different from that which Father Mansi claims. The final *etc.*, placed after these words,

'which is difficult with nuns, etc.,' can indicate nothing other than that with other Women the rendering honorable will be easy. Let us discuss it with still greater clarity. In this text of yours there are two *etceteras*. The last, you say, signifies 'for the sake of administering treatment'; and I shall say that it signifies 'for the sake of taking pleasure.' Where in that entire text is there a word which indicates medical treatment? Further: if that miraculous Siglum had been placed after the words 'or by the title of friendship,' it would not even then have covered the error; nevertheless, that alone was the place in which it ought to have been placed. But being placed after the words 'which is difficult

with nuns,' it is altogether out of place, and there is no human mind in the World which can discern in this ridiculous *etc.* the meaning which you attach to it. I wish to press you a little further. You have explained the meaning of the final *etc.*; and what is the meaning of the first *etc.*, inserted in the text after the words 'touching, looks, etc.'? If you have explained the second, you must also declare the first. I say still more. In your book there are hundreds of *etceteras*. If you interpret each one as you do the present one, you will print another fine little volume under the title: *Interpretations of the Etceteras, Etc., of the Reverend Father Mansi*. But do you not reflect, Most Reverend Father, that if an *etc.* sufficed to defend texts like yours, there would be no heresy that could not be justified with an *etc.*? You cry out that the final *etc.* was omitted.

Listen, Father. If this Siglum of yours signified anything, I would relate to you a most true fact: that the author of the *Examination* copied even this final *etc.* in his manuscript; that through one of those ordinary accidents which commonly occur in printing it was omitted; and that this is a fact which can be proved by showing the said original manuscript to a hundred witnesses. I would add that, notwithstanding the fidelity and innocence of the author of the *Examination*, you are right, because whether the omission is innocent or culpable, your text is always truncated. But I wish this account to be regarded as unsaid. For this astonishing invention of your *etcetera*, wherever it may stand in your text, and especially where you placed it, is one of the most ridiculous subterfuges, one of the most pitiable escapes, that has ever fallen into a human mind. Therefore I wish to say no more upon this point, fearing that by now the courteous Reader may already be indignant at seeing the puerile, captious, and strange methods - to say nothing else - by which incontestable absurdities are claimed to be defended.

From the very beginning the Reverend Father Mansi ought to have confessed that in writing it he had not reflected well upon that sentence, and that he had not intended to signify what his words express. In this or a similar manner he would have proceeded honestly, and would have acquired more credit by this sincere Christian confession than he had lost by his error. But to wish to justify the absurdity in the aforementioned manner with a Siglum, with an *etc.*; to proceed to slander the author of the *Examination* and to publish a flying pamphlet against him: this is deliberately to render oneself worthy of disapproval among all the Wise. Nor was it enough for the Reverend Father Mansi to publish Father Concina as the author of the *Examination*, an anonymous Book, and to accuse him of having cut an *etc.*, a Siglum, from his text; worse still, he charges him with having mutilated the texts of the other Casuists, his colleagues. Let us recite his words: 'I ask, therefore, that henceforth you read the writings of others more carefully. For because you have more negligently ... run through the writings of others, it has often resulted that you report mutilated the testimonies which you plucked from them; often you interpret their words otherwise than the authors' meaning requires.' If the Reverend Father Mansi is an honest man, he is bound to prove to the public these mutilations of texts and these false interpretations. Otherwise, so long as he does not prove this, he will remain subject to those black stains to which those who falsely charge their neighbor with crimes are rightly subject.

XXI. For more than a century, whenever the gentlemen Probabilists have seen the scandalous opinions of their Authors exposed to the public, they have resorted to this desperate expedient of denying that the texts were faithfully reported. Everyone sees that none but a madman could put forward an altered text copied from Casuistic Books open to all. Who is so foolish as to wish to

expose himself to being convicted with evidence as a falsifier, an impostor? And yet should not the Probabilists who accuse the author of the *History* of altering texts, when these are in reality faithfully reported, themselves be subject to the aforementioned reproaches and censures? It is true. But these gentlemen know certainly that very few of their numerous party will undertake to check the said texts. They know certainly that their devout and affectionate partisans commonly, with very few exceptions, drink in with closed eyes their strangest opinions, because they are congenial to human appetites. Relying upon this common credulity of their adherents, it matters little to them that the men of understanding, who are few, recognize their false and unjust accusations; it is enough for them to keep the devout multitude firm. I always speak only of those Probabilists who write against Father Concina's Books, among whom Father Mansi is less excusable than the others. He has seen how his Principal, Father Niccolò Ghezzi, remains convicted, by evidence superior to every reply, of having erred in every respect when he imputed alterations of texts to Father Concina. Nevertheless, in order to walk in agreement with his Colleagues, he has taken courage to reproach him with a similar alteration.

XXII. I come to the final threat of our Father Mansi, who writes thus: 'For until now you have had many Adversaries, and henceforth you are to have more numerous ones, since every day with new writings you provoke new ones.' The new Adversary who came forth against Father Concina before being provoked is an Adversary who goes to assault him with the catapult of an *etc.* He cares little for similar Adversaries, though they are confederated with a very valiant militia. Truth alone is that which he prizes and esteems. He venerates all his Adversaries; but if their Books contain lax opinions, he will always refute them without any fear. Certain other threats of the Reverend Father Mansi, made to reach someone whom he well knows by way of a private letter, are passed over out of compassion. Saint Jerome compares Rufinus, who uttered similar threats, to the Jew Bar Kokhba: 'You, of course, are fiery, indeed thundering: you thunder when speaking and cannot contain the flames conceived in your mouth; and just as Bar Kokhba, the author of the Jewish revolt, waved a lighted straw in his mouth so that he might be thought to vomit flames, so you too, like another Salmoneus, illuminate everything through which you advance,' etc. (*Apology*, book 2). Such methods, however, are not practiced in disputes among honest Men of Letters, but in the workshops of executioners: 'This is your true dilemma, brought forth not from the dialectical art, which you do not know, but from the workshop and practice of executioners' (ibid.).

Father Mansi concludes his letter by saying that he judged it proper to point out the errors to the author of the *Examination*, not in the vernacular tongue, but in Latin: 'I thought they should be pointed out to you, not indeed in the vernacular, but in the Latin language.' And why? Hear our Probabilist: 'Because I greatly abhor the custom of those who, writing on Theology to Theologians, use the speech of the common people, as if, mistrusting the goodness of their cause, they seem to seek for themselves from little women and common men the approval which they despair of obtaining from Theologians.' In truth, Reverend Father, it would have been better for you if you had written in Chinese, so that no one could have discerned your brilliant ideas. Woe to you if you had written in the vernacular. In that case, if once in Lucca it was said, as you know, 'Indeed, he does not even sin,' now it would be said, 'The Probabilist, interpreter of the Siglum, that is, of the *etc.*'

XXIII. Lest the public be left little edified at seeing time cast away in conflicts so puerile and captious, let it know that the author of the *Theological Examination* placed Father Mansi's scandalous

doctrine beneath prudent consideration, not, as has been said, in order to disturb his confederation with his Probabilists, but in order to preserve the Faithful from the certainly pernicious opinions of his aforementioned Book. He gives thanks to the Lord for having attained his purpose. Father Mansi's Book was denounced to the Sacred Congregation of the Index. It was judged worthy of proscription; and unless he reprints it purged of many false and scandalous propositions, it is understood - as is notorious in Rome - to be condemned by that very fact. Among these propositions is the one which formed the subject of the present controversy, and it must be removed with all its *etceteras, etceteras*. Let us therefore both take comfort, most esteemed Father Mansi: Your Reverence for having been enlightened by the Sacred Tribunal concerning dangerous opinions, and I for having been the occasion of such an amendment; and let us both give thanks to the Father of lights for so great a good.

XXIV. For greater clarity and confirmation of what has been said, I have judged it well to reprint Father Mansi's entire letter, so that everyone may become clear about the truth of the facts. Would to God that the same could be done whenever Casuistic texts are cited. Yet there are souls so obstinate and minds so blinded that they wish to deceive themselves with their eyes open. At this moment I hear that a poor Parish Priest of Piacenza, the unconscious instrument of certain Probabilists, writes to a friend of his that Father Lecchi's *Warnings* have identified the altered texts in the *History of Probabilism*, and that he himself has checked them. If he had a shadow of reputation and conscience, he ought to produce a single one of these texts. But such people are to be commended to God, not convinced. The Reverend Prebendary will see in this Book that his Father Lecchi was unable to show even a single text produced in the *History of Probabilism* with less than complete fidelity. He will observe that where the Reverend Father Lecchi claims to catch the author of the *History* in a fault, he himself errs in a manner unworthy of his erudition. In wishing to defend Father Sánchez from having taught the condemned opinion in the administration of the Sacraments, he shows that he does not understand the condemned proposition itself. But this is the art employed for an entire Century by certain Probabilists: to accuse as altered the excessively scandalous texts of their Authors, knowing well that they will find good ignorant partisans similar to the Prebendary of Piacenza, and passionate zealots deeply engaged in supporting lax doctrines accommodated to their appetites, who will receive the falsehoods of their Probabilists as oracles. But let this be said in passing.

XXV. The Reverend Father Mansi is reminded that if in future he wishes to print some little Book for the instruction of those Luccan Clerics whom he, as Examiner, qualifies for Holy Orders, he should not fill it with so many *etceteras, etceteras*, lest he be the occasion of many errors for them. They scarcely understand doctrines well expressed in ordinary words. And then will the Reverend Father Mansi claim that, in the hieroglyphic of an *etc.*, those Clerics inexperienced in theological controversies should discern all these words, 'for the sake of administering treatment'? Let him cause a formal examination to be held; and if, among that entire multitude of Priests his Disciples, there is a single one who, before his interpretation, discerned those words of his in the mysterious Siglum, I shall concede the case to him. But to conclude the whole with a Christian reflection: are the laxest opinions of the Casuists condensed into little Books, and are those little Books placed in the hands of young Ecclesiastics chosen by God to be so many exemplars of Evangelical perfection? Is this the milk of doctrine with which the Ministers of the Sanctuary are nourished? And then do we complain if we see the World filled with scandals? And do these Books printed for young Clerics find defenders and protectors, so that they may not be removed from the hands of the innocent? O times! O morals!

To the Reader

TO THE READER

There are two reasons for reprinting the letter of the Reverend Father Giovanni Domenico Mansi. The first is that it may be plain to all how much the efforts of this Adversary matter to us. The second is that the customary and exceedingly stale slander concerning altered texts may not again be foisted upon Father Concina. Would that the vast size of the Casuists' books did not prevent a similar edition. Whenever a text is copied, if the whole book were published, there would be no room for the inveterate slander. Meanwhile, in our judgment, all who reproach us with altered texts without presenting any proof stand in the place of Slanderers. Thus far none of the Probabilists has been able to identify even a single text produced with less than complete fidelity. Farewell.

Father Mansi's Letter to Father Concina, with Concina's Notes

TO THE VERY REVEREND FATHER
DANIEL CONCINA
OF THE ORDER OF PREACHERS
MOST ACCOMPLISHED THEOLOGIAN
GREETINGS

That you wished me to be commended by the title of most illustrious man of letters in your volume recently published at the presses of Pesaro, as its imprint states, the *Theological Examination of the Book Entitled Specimen of the Supplements, etc.*,[1] I recognize as an act of your courtesy, most illustrious Sir. For neither are my merits in letters so great that they demanded it; nor, if they did demand it, is your veneration for men of letters so great that they would compel you, unwilling and reluctant, to compliance.[2] But that thereafter, on page 9, you represent me as tasteless, uncivil, and, what is worse, a breaker of the laws of Christian charity; that you close your writing about me with that scurrilous saying, 'You got yourself into it; you must eat it all': I admit that all this must be attributed to the love with which you burn for reforming Christian ethics.[3] I praise both, namely the courtesy and the pious zeal, provided, however, that you agree that some moderation should be added to each. Let it be for others to judge what limits should be prescribed to your courtesy toward me; but I think that charity and truth must be applied by you as the rule for the zeal of reforming moral doctrine.[4] For because you have often neglected both, it has happened that not rarely you likewise destroy by the deed itself the same reform which you build up in words. I demonstrate this, not by another's example, but by my own.

[1] Whence do you know that the author of that work is Concina?

[2] If you are courteous toward a Probabilist, will you not be so toward truly learned men? Your merits in letters are few. And you flare up against one who calls you most illustrious among men of letters? So great is your modesty? More truthfully: why so many objections at the very threshold?

[3] Those things were said against the author of the *Notice*. Do you twist them against yourself? Therefore, even unwillingly, you confess yourself the author of the *Notice*.

[4] You are a Probabilist, and you commend truth? What commerce have Probabilists with truth? Have you so quickly forgotten the doctrine of your Father Niccolò Ghezzi? 'For establishing the opinion of the Probabilists,' he says on page 33, 'it matters NOT AT ALL that the less Probable opinion can be directly affirmed TO BE TRUE.' Are you ignorant of another oracle of the most celebrated Probabilist Father Casnedi? In his *Tribunal of Truth*, he EQUATES BLAMELESS ERROR WITH TRUTH ITSELF. You boast exultantly of being a Probabilist, and are ignorant of these things? If you are not ignorant - for you were the Approver of Father Ghezzi's Book - why do you exhort us to embrace truth? Why inculcate Charity, if the Probabilists teach that its command scarcely binds of itself, or only at the point of death, or every five or three years?

Last year Father Niccolò Ghezzi - to whom you may rightly transfer the title of learned man, unjustly granted to me[5] - a distinguished ornament of the Society of Jesus, sent me a Book of *Dialogues* composed by him against your *History*, to be printed at the presses of Lucca.[6] By order of the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Prelate Giuseppe Palma, our most deserving Bishop, I read through it; and because I found it learned and moderate - a moderation whose absence in other Books of that kind I have always greatly lamented,[7] and still equally lament - I judged that it should be approved

and printed. The edition was therefore begun, and I supervised it until the time arrived for a certain journey which had long before been arranged for me.[8] In my absence the edition proceeded, with a most learned friend, neither unknown nor unwelcome to you, acting in my place. To him Father Ghezzi, whom I had informed of that substitution, sent a Friend's *Notice*, which is read printed at the very threshold of the work.

[5] The author of the *Examination* bestows it lavishly upon both.

[6] Therefore you enrolled yourself as an auxiliary in the confederacy of the Probabilists against Concina. Why then, when occasion was given, would he not also summon your Books to Christian Criticism?

[7] Concerning this moderation, see Casuistic Paradox V, number 13.

[8] You departed to visit your Father Ghezzi in Milan; and then the *Notice* was sent to Lucca to your friend. You relate these things, but you keep silent about your conversation with Father Ghezzi, and demand that credence be given to you?

I never read it, either before it was printed or afterward when printed. Indeed, on returning to my homeland I found that it had not yet been committed to the press; but being occupied and distracted with other matters, I was wholly unable to read it. On the faith of my most learned friend, who asserted upon his own pledged faith that it was moderate and contained nothing incongruous, I judged that it should be signed. This is a sincere exposition of the event, for the truth of which I am prepared to offer myself as guarantor even by interposing the sacred obligation of an oath.[9] This account plainly overturns that entire suspicion of yours. For you suppose that I am that friend who wrote the *Notice* by which you are deeply wounded. But what reason have you for judging thus of me and making me the author of that little production? This one alone: that I am joined in friendship with Father Ghezzi.[10] I confess it. Does it therefore follow immediately that I am also your adversary, though I have never had any dealings whatsoever with you? But you say: you assisted in publishing the work. I do not deny it. Did I therefore also produce the Friend's *Notice*?[11] Moreover, the friend who wrote it did not merely assist with the edition, but was the promoter of publishing the work.

[9] How much credence should be given to the oath of Probabilists, see again Paradox V, numbers 3 and 4.

[10] You confess it. The part undertaken in publishing the Book gave rise to the suspicion.

[11] Very Probable. What one person says, Sánchez being witness, is Probable. One person, and indeed one of great authority, reported that you were the author of the *Notice*. Therefore the suspicion conceived concerning you is probable.

Who - I do not say one tenacious of Probabiliorism, but even a follower of the laxer Probabilism - would think that sufficient argument was supplied to him from this to lacerate with insults a man whom he had never before had as an adversary; to arraign him as guilty of violated Christian charity; and finally to turn upside down a Book published by him, so as to find in it something which he might gnaw with an envious tooth and by which he might create the utmost odium against his name? [12] But let us see whether the things which you extracted from my Book are more faithful than the things which you judged concerning me.[13]

[12] It has been determined that your Book must be proscribed in Rome and throughout the world unless you purge it of errors. So great was the benefit which that occasion brought to the Christian commonwealth.

[13] There is a great difference between a judgment and a suspicion. And are you ignorant of it? Do you deny it? Why then did you write, 'He judged'?

I compiled this little Book long ago, while still a young man, with this intention first: that I might instruct myself in moral doctrine by reading and excerpting the Theologians.[14] For I am not one who thinks that the reading of the Fathers alone, with the more recent Theologians neglected,[15] suffices for forming a novice Confessor. Then, at the persuasion of friends, who judged that the things which I had selected for my private instruction would be useful to the Confessors of our diocese, I consented that it should be published, with a title prefixed which was certainly not semi-barbarous,[16] as the new Horace of our time, if it please God, jeers in a *Satire against the Probabilists* recently published at Lucca, but such as the usage of the best Theologians approves: *Treatise on Cases and Excommunications Reserved to Bishops, etc.*, by Giovanni Domenico Mansi, etc., Lucca, 1724.

[14] But as an old man, in 1739, you caused the same work, reviewed with a second care, to be published.

[15] It is not imputed to you as a fault that you read the Recent Theologians, but that you neglected the Fathers and the Councils.

[16] Let the style be elegant in your judgment. But in the judgment of others, your doctrine is more than barbarous and not a little rank.

In this little Book, while discussing the individual crimes reserved by the law of Lucca, I came to the place[17] where it was necessary to treat of touchings attempted upon nuns by those who live outside the cloister. By adducing proofs I established that those touchings are called dishonorable which are greatly unbecoming to the state and quality of persons in matters pertaining to chastity.[18] Having thus established these things, I added:[19] 'Touching of the private parts, kisses, embraces, touching of the breasts, performed by persons of different sex, when they are not rendered honorable either by the custom of the country or by the title of friendship - which is difficult with Nuns, etc. - are reserved, etc.'[20]

[17] You came to the place where touchings of Nuns were treated? But you ought not to have come there. For there you crossed all the boundaries of modesty, honesty, and decorum.

[18] But you taught that things which are unbecoming can be rendered honorable by the title of friendship and the custom of the country.

[19] 'Are reserved, etc.' is absent from your Book. Now you add it so that you may fasten the slander of fraud upon your adversary. Are you, pray, a sincere man in reporting texts?

[20] You mutilate the following text so that there may be room for slander.

From these words of mine you infer, and ascribe to my reasoning, a doctrine plainly absurd, new, unheard-of even by your own Arauxos, Zanardis, and Sousas, who are somewhat more indulgent in these matters,[21] and pernicious: namely, that touching of women's private parts and breasts, attempted by the wantonness of men, will be innocent and indifferent if it is rendered honorable by the custom of the country.[22] But I ask you, Father Concina, could this ever have come into your mind concerning me,[23] when in the immediately preceding case I had asserted, against many who deny it, that even the more wanton touching of women's breasts was not merely shameful but also obscene? Would I have handed down so monstrous a doctrine, supported by no weight of reasons, in passing and as though doing something else, with no testimony of Theologians added,[24] and without any hesitation? What kind of man do you believe me to be, what kind of Theologian do you judge me, whom you call illustrious among men of letters?[25]

[21] In what respect are those Theologians more indulgent? Who even among the Pagans ever taught things laxer than you in this kind?

[22] Why did you omit: 'or by the title of friendship'?

[23] It would never have entered the mind of any mortal if you had not published such things in repeated editions both as a young man and as an old man.

[24] Your Book sings it loudly. The Probabilists make progress day by day. Each strives to snatch the palm from the others in rendering laws lax, with a good intention and for the sake of saving the faithful. You too strove to enlarge the broad domains of Probabilism.

[25] He called you most illustrious among Theologians; but he made your Book, filled with pernicious doctrine, known to the unwary so that they might beware of it.

Let us examine, I pray, what could have brought you to that opinion concerning me. It must have been very serious indeed, if it could move a Theologian who forms his doctrine according to the strict laws of Probabiliorism to create so adverse a judgment concerning me. You affirm that you understood it from my words; for you say that after these words, 'Touching of the private parts, kisses, embraces, touching of the breasts are criminal,' I immediately added, 'unless they are rendered honorable by the custom of the country.' I did indeed write that.[26] But did I ever say or teach that all[27] those things can be rendered honorable by the custom of the country? It was sufficient for the truth of those words if even some of those things, though not all, could be rendered honorable by the custom of the country. The Doctors commonly assert that this holds for embraces and kisses, and from their meaning I judged that this should be noted.

[26] You did indeed write that? Why then do you lament? Why do you quarrel? Confess the error, and the case is finished.

[27] I grant it. Yet in this very Letter you assert that looks, touchings, etc., of Nuns can be rendered honorable either by the custom of the country or by the title of friendship. In what country is this custom? Where, with Nuns, does the title of friendship furnish a right to touchings or grant the use of them? But these are trifles to Probabilists of this kind.

I added another cause of rendering honorable: the title of friendship. Who indeed could have thought me of so gross an understanding that I would enumerate touching of the private parts and breasts among signs of friendship?[28] Friendship is expressed by kisses and embraces, never by foul touching. You see that I reported several causes[29] of rendering those actions honorable, some of which applied to some actions and others to others. I set forth the causes which rendered kisses and embraces honorable. After these words I added the sign of abbreviation *etc.*,[30] in order to intimate that there could be other causes capable of rendering those touchings honorable, such as for the sake of administering treatment. Since these causes were very well known, I judged that they should not indeed be expressed, but indicated by placing that siglum *etc.*[31]

[28] This absolute phrase openly declares signs of friendship: 'Unless they are rendered honorable either by the custom of the country or by the title of friendship.' Unless you have no sense at all, you yourself will be forced to confess that the aforesaid phrase comprehends everything which precedes in the sentence. If you dare to deny these things, what will you not deny?

[29] You brought forward several causes? In your Book only two occur: the custom of the country and the title of friendship.

[30] This portentous *etc.* of yours, after these words, 'Touching, looks, etc.,' portends things more shameful. After the other words, 'which is difficult with Nuns, etc.,' it likewise introduces either worse things or ridiculous ones.

[31] You judged that they should be indicated by placing that siglum *etc.*? Is it truly so? Is so much force inherent in this *etc.* of yours that it indicates these words, 'for the sake of administering treatment'? Why not also these: 'for the sake of

taking pleasure'? Come now. Why ought this *Etcetera* of yours to signify those words rather than these? Explain this Casuistic Enigma of yours.

Indeed, I did not set down this compendious sign by chance, but deliberately, so that it might signify something which at that time I judged ought to be left unspoken as sufficiently known in itself. Now, therefore, I express it by my own right: 'Unless they are rendered honorable by the custom of the country, by the title of friendship, or for the sake of treatment.' Why do you croak against this doctrine? The custom of the country and the title of friendship have regard to kisses and embraces; treatment has regard to foul touchings. Just as this last does not agree with kisses, etc., so neither do the former causes apply to touchings. You cut off that siglum; whether this was done by evil design or by chance I do not discuss. This is certain: by its being cut off, you made your accusation, which that compendious sign plainly weakened, at least stronger in appearance. I ask, therefore, that henceforth you read the writings of others more carefully, for

because you have run through the writings of others too carelessly - for thus I judge concerning a Probabiliorist Theologian - it has often resulted that you report mutilated the testimonies which you plucked from them; often you interpret their words otherwise than the authors' meaning requires.[32]

[32] The slander is most manifest which your confederates have employed for one century and more, with fruitless effort. Until now, however, not one of them took refuge in your portentous *Etcetera*. So great a secret was reserved for you alone. I ask you to be willing, at least for a moment, to assume the part of just reasoning. In order that you might deceive the tunic-clad little people and persuade them that your text had been altered, you were compelled to devise a fiction never conceived since the foundation of the world.

Here you have, most illustrious Sir, the blemishes which I seemed to myself to have detected in your Books. I judged, however, that they should be pointed out to you not in the vernacular tongue but in Latin, because I greatly abhor the custom of those who, writing on Theology to Theologians, use the speech of the common people, as if, mistrusting the goodness of their cause, they seem to seek for themselves from little women and common men the approval which they despair of obtaining from Theologians. Moreover, I think that henceforth these faults must especially be guarded against by you, lest day by day you furnish your adversaries a graver occasion for complaining of you. For until now you have had many adversaries, and henceforth you are to have more numerous ones,[33] since every day with new writings you provoke new ones. Their attacks will always be the more troublesome to you if you do not remove the weapons which until now you have furnished them.

[33] Truth has always had many enemies, and henceforth will have more, because all things decline toward extremes. Nevertheless, she has always been victor over them all.

Farewell, Reverend Father, and I wish you to use me, although a Probabilist,[34] not as an adversary but as a friend; for I am

[34] The author of the *Theological Examination* will be of service to you, not as a Probabilist nor as a most deserving enlarger of Casuistry, but as a most illustrious Man of Letters.

Your Reverend Father's
Most devoted and most obedient servant,
Giovanni Domenico Mansi
of the Congregation of the Mother of God of Lucca
Lucca, from our College of St. Mary Corteorlandini,
6 July 1745.

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Reflections upon the Book of Father Lecchi Entitled Warnings

REFLECTIONS
UPON THE BOOK OF THE REVEREND FATHER LECCHI
ENTITLED
WARNINGS
Set against the *History of Probabilism,* etc.

Chapter I — Upon the Whole Book of the Reverend Father Lecchi

CHAPTER I
REFLECTIONS
UPON THE WHOLE BOOK OF THE REVEREND FATHER LECCHI

I. Before reading the four Books published by the Reverend Fathers Sanvitale, Ghezzi, Lecchi, and Bovio against the *History of Probabilism*, I did not have so much confidence in that work. But after I observed that none of these worthy men had seen fit to set against that History another, better body of history, or to assail that same History at any of its principal points - indeed, not even to refute the correct notions by which alone Father Concina renders Probabilism monstrous - I began to reason within myself in this fashion. If four of the most learned Theologians among the Probabilists, over the course of about two years and with the abundant assistance of other Companions, have not even attempted to attack either the substance of the History or any principal point of its doctrine, it must be said that this History, as regards the truthfulness of its facts and the solidity of its doctrine, is beyond every reply. Father Sanvitale, the first opponent, has woven the lives of his more benign Probabilists together with a few other little matters. Father Ghezzi has advanced farther. He has made the old retortions of absurdities. He has written several Dialogues to show that the Author of the History is a Jansenist; he has discoursed at length upon the *Provincial Letters*, and upon certain other facts of no consequence and, in any case, contrary to him. Your Reverence, who is said to be the Reverend Father Lecchi, has done much less than Father Ghezzi. You go about detaching an occasional word, now from here, now from there, now from the preface, now from the body of the *History of Probabilism*; and upon those words torn from their places you form your meditations. In various of your *Warnings* you touch upon the very same - precisely the same - things as Father Ghezzi. I shall therefore be constrained frequently to refer you to the reading of the *Theological Examination* made of Father Ghezzi's Book. Here is the reason why I said that an answer would be given to your *Warnings* even amid grave occupations. I shall pass over many things as entirely useless. Yet if this just disregard of mine for many of your things were ever censured by you as an inability to answer, I promise that a prompt answer will be given to whatever difficulty you might boast to be impregnable. But I am certain that you will instead thank me for this prudent silence of mine, which is all too advantageous both for you and for the readers. And since I find nothing solid to refute in your Book, I shall set in view some of your witty comparisons and singular inventions. As for the bitter and biting style with which you have treated the Author of the History, to tell you the truth, we may be satisfied with it, in view of the manners of those other Associates of yours who have written against him. Even if you too have played your part, you have nevertheless endeavored to do yourself more violence than the others did, so as not fully to reveal your good disposition toward your Adversary. In one thing you have joined Father Giacomo Sanvitale, namely, in borrowing from the Reverend Father Carrattino the insults and reproaches hurled against Father Concina, whom you wish to take as your target as though separated from his Order. And here, you write on page 2, *a perpetual precaution is required in separating the cause of that private Man from that of his Order . . . I console myself, however, that in this so just separation of causes I see myself already preceded by zealous and learned Brothers of THEIR and OUR COMMON ADVERSARY, who are deeply grieved that, under pretext or delusion of zeal, the unity and concord of the Religious Orders should be disturbed by anyone whatsoever. Listen, etc.* And here Your Reverence copies

out the fine things printed by Father Master Carrattino against the Author of the *Monastic Discipline*, which I intend to pass over. I shall only ask you what you mean to signify by those words, *their and our Common Adversary*? If you intend to represent Father Concina as an adversary of both Orders, of the Dominicans and of the Jesuits, you are altogether mistaken; for he glories in being a most grateful and most affectionate son of both these Orders: of that of the Jesuits, because of his education for several years, and of that of Saint Dominic, in which he put on the Sacred Habit. If, however, you mean that Father Concina is the adversary both of those two Dominicans who have unhappily written against the incontestable doctrine of Monastic poverty, and of those eight or ten Jesuits who have printed so many little Books against him in defense of Probabilism, of the Touchings of the Breasts, of Blasphemy through Habit, and of so many other similar false opinions, know that Father Concina is not dismayed even by this. Indeed, strengthened by Divine grace, he is resolved to defend the sound doctrine of Evangelical Morals not only against all of you who have been mentioned, although you belong to different Orders, but he will courageously fight against anyone else who should confederate himself with you in defense of the aforesaid false and scandalous propositions. When he has truth on his side in the causes indicated, as he is certain that he has, he does not fear the whole world, much less you gentlemen. Finally, if you intend to enter into league and confederation with the said Dominicans, know that those two Writers, once they have obtained their *peculium*, will themselves turn their arms against the Probabilists. For the rest, whatever may be the meaning of those words of yours which have been described, it suffices for me to declare to you that neither Father Concina nor I myself, in refuting your Books, will ever depart from the customary rules both of modesty and of respect. If the justice of the cause and the advantage of the truth frequently render your reasonings too unfortunate, no one will be able to ascribe this either to mordacity or to a want of charity, but solely to the merits of the cause. Remember that I shall never expose to ridicule your most esteemed person, whom I respect and venerate, but your arguments, which, in the judgment of all the Wise, will deserve to be treated in this manner.

Chapter II — Upon the Bizarre Fancy in Which Father Lecchi Likens Moral Theology to the Mercantile Cabala of the Mississippi, and upon the Excuse for Printing Books Clandestinely

CHAPTER II
REFLECTIONS
UPON THE BIZARRE FANCY IN WHICH FATHER LECCHI LIKENS MORAL THEOLOGY TO THE MERCANTILE CABALA OF THE MISSISSIPPI, AND UPON THE EXCUSE FOR PRINTING BOOKS CLANDESTINELY

I. The Letter in which the *Warnings* are addressed to your Lord Count is sprinkled with various fine things. First, all at once you transcribe all the biting and insulting Satires which Father Carrattino has published against Father Concina. By this stroke of Christian policy you would like to stir up a domestic war in another's house, in order thereby to reap advantage in your own house. But this time your policy has failed you, and I remind you that you will certainly have to repent of this manner of proceeding. What has the cause of the *Monastic Discipline* to do, Most Esteemed Father, with the cause of the *History of Probabilism*? In its proper time we shall discuss it, and we shall see whether the doctrine of the *Cloistered Life*, which you praise so much together with your other Associate, accords with the poverty commanded by the Most Holy Patriarch Saint Ignatius.

II. You proceed on page 3 to instruct your Lord Count with a passage of the most profound Theology. So that your things may not lose their luster or appear too languid, I shall transcribe them in your own words. Thus, then, you write: *To cheer you a little, hear, Lord Count, on this subject a droll but true and quite explanatory Thought of mine. Whenever I hear certain grandiose designs for a Morality previously unknown, there awakens in my mind that so famous project of the new commerce of the MISSISSIPPI, which not many years ago attracted so many adventurers. More than ten percent: for a paltry Capital, security was given that an inestimable wealth in gold and silver would come into their hands. You know whether they ran in crowds to carry all their possessions to the bank of the MISSISSIPPI. But certain few shrewd Old Men, who could obtain a clear idea of this new Peru neither from ancient nor from modern maps, nor from other reports, laughed in their hearts at this traffic of the other World; but outwardly they pretended to think with the others, and it was great prudence not to contradict the fashion of the new commerce, and to concede to the young Merchants the calculation they were already making upon the imagined treasures at the first return of the ships. Time revealed the deception of some and the prudence of the others, who did not follow the clamor. A similar thing seems to me to happen in many faculties, and especially in Moral Theology, in which, imagining that new mines have been found and a new World discovered, entirely unknown to our good Ancients, a great crowd of adventurers gathers around, enticed by the abundance and by the incredible ease of the gain promised to them.*

III. What thing more apt and more witty could ever be conceived by a Master of Divinity to dispose the soul and mind of the Christian Reader to understand a cause in which his eternal salvation or his eternal damnation is at issue? Mississippi and Probabilism; shrewd Old Men and Moral Theology: these form, to tell the truth, a very delightful mosaic to cheer the Lord Count, and a very bizarre grotesque to entertain the Lady Countess. I wish to ask them: Lord Count, did you understand anything of this capricious enigma, or riddle, whatever it may be? Truly, if I must confess the matter as it stands, I, being little practiced in Casuistic History, understand nothing of certain strange

allusions. Be content, therefore, Lord Count, that on this occasion I take the place of your Father Master, since I too am persuaded that you are entirely in the dark concerning the witty Apologue. I myself, although somewhat versed in Theological matters, at first understood absolutely nothing. Only after having carefully considered this compound - Old Men. Moral Theology. Mississippi - did I perceive that its most likely, or at least least unnatural, sense, whether allegorical or literal, can be none other than this. The Moral Theology of twenty-four Old Men was printed by the Reverend Father Escobar. These twenty-four Old Men are divided twelve to a side. In hundreds of questions you will find twelve for Yes and twelve for No. And those who are for Yes concerning the same contract do not condemn the No as bad; and conversely, those who are for No do not condemn those who are for Yes. For the *Philosophers' Stone* of Probabilism, with only two practical reflections, changes the glowing chains of Hell into golden necklaces of Paradise. More than - I shall say in the words of Your Reverence - ten percent. You know whether everyone ran in crowds to carry all their possessions to the bank of the Mississippi, all to procure this little Volume, so precious for every mercantile fair: the *Sums* of Escobar, Busembaum, Tamburini, and Castro Palao. Know, Lord Count, that the notes of these Sums had such circulation that the Escobarian *Sum* alone was printed about forty times in a few years; Busembaum, Tamburini, Castro Palao, and Diana had a similar circulation. For many years they crowded to the bank of this Casuistic Mississippi. Nowadays this new Probabilistic Mississippi no longer has so sure a vogue. Frequent reprintings of such notes are no longer seen. And be assured, Lord Count, that mine is History, not Apologue. If you wish to verify it, go to Venice to the celebrated Merchant and Bookseller Signor Pezzana, who truly made abundant profits for many years by printing the aforesaid Books. The Agent of this business will tell you that at present few Tamburinis, few Castro Palaos, and few Escobars are sold, but that copies of Bésombes, Gennet, Pontas, and Albert's *De Paenitentia* are beginning to acquire vogue. I would continue, Lord Count, to interpret the bizarre invention part by part, but I should fear abusing time on things too ridiculous. His Reverence will complain at seeing his droll thought exposed under a figure quite contemptible, though otherwise true. But I am certain that the whole World will judge him to be in the wrong, because he professed that he wished to cheer his Lord Count with a droll thought in order to dispose him to understand the present state of Moral Theology; and, on the contrary, all the Wise will do me justice in making the less well-ordered fancies of His Reverence worthy of laughter, so that it may be learned once and for all that it would now be time to treat Theological truths with grave, solid, and Christian thoughts, not with childish and theatrical little thoughts and conceits. Can an invention more insipid and less opportune be imagined for representing the state of modern Christian Theology than the mercantile cabala of the Mississippi? I, therefore, not for want of respect toward the Reverend Father Escobar and the venerable Old Men cited in his *Sum*, but solely so that the learned Adversary may in the future abstain from exposing his thoughts in public without first having matured them, have wished to turn back upon him the brilliant invention of his phantom.

IV. His Reverence ends the letter to the Lord Count by informing him that he does not publish his Name. Thus he writes on page 5: *I do not subscribe my Name, as is customary; and although Father Concina warns the public that he wishes to recognize in the face every Adversary, whom he says he awaits with firmer foot, he will have his reasons for wishing it; I, and perhaps others as well, have ours for not wishing it, except when and as either it shall seem more opportune to us, or the case itself shall make the discovery. In this opposition of wishes the rights of both parties are equal.* Very well. Father Concina desired that a most grave cause of Christian Theology should be treated with faces uncovered, with mutual peace, with complete impartiality, and

with all moderation. And because the Author's name contributes greatly to these things, since by revealing himself he makes himself answerable for his every statement, he therefore desires to know his Adversaries by sight. For the rest, when you have particular reasons for not subjecting yourself to this sincere and natural manner of disputing, he does not bring suit against you on that account. He himself has allowed that just reasons may occur for which a concealed Author keeps his name to himself. Thus far he is in agreement with you. What Your Reverence adds will cause you displeasure, because you have run aground on another shoal worse than the Mississippi. Let us transcribe your words from the same pages 5 and 6: *Father Concina predicts toward the end of the To the Reader that the Authors, both past and future, will be revealed through various learned discoveries. With whom is this good Father taking issue so at random? We shall await these strange tidings with tranquility of spirit, without fear that his severe Morality will suffer any loss.* Precisely, Father: that will be his sole concern, to propagate the truth without prejudicing the integrity of Christian Morals. He is persuaded that there is a royal road for revealing and defending the truth without violating the laws of charity and honesty. Your Reverence here calls his Adversary *the good Father*; Father Monti calls him *the good Son*; Father C., Author of the famous *Retraction*, calls him *Friar Concina*. How all three of you unite in singularity of language. But let us continue your Text. *He rejects - Father Concina, that is - the little Books printed clandestinely. With him these are the ones that strike blind blows by treachery.... I hope that, if by Books printed clandestinely he means that sort of Books which conceal the Author's name, I warn him that it belonged to anyone else rather than to him to touch upon so delicate an article. Let him tell me: Would he call the Work of Signor Carlo Antonio Piantamura a Book printed clandestinely? - Father, no, as I shall presently explain. - Yet with that fictitious name Father Concina was unable to conceal himself sufficiently from his cellmate.... Now who less than he ought to reproach his Adversaries for Books printed clandestinely? Have they perhaps thrown themselves into the woods to assail Domestics and Foreigners? Yet Father Concina, says his Religious Brother, in another Dissertation attacks his Mother ... with a license that did not become a son, etc.* Did you hear, Your Reverence? Father Concina is the one who threw himself into the woods to assail Domestics and Foreigners. Here is all the truth and honesty of writing; but let us resume the text. *Everyone, however, sees the great difference between him and his Contradictors. He assails, accuses, wounds; these have long stood upon the defensive. If those Authors could not defend themselves in any other fashion than by lowering their visors, who could forbid it? Although Father Concina would show better sense by never again provoking them to give an account of what they do. He trusts too much in the WISDOM of Men who prefer to incur the REPROACH OF BEING TIMID THAN OF BEING BOLD. If these sometimes present the shield and hide themselves beneath it, he knows why, and the World knows it.*

V. When the World reads this passage of yours, what great and bizarre comments it will make upon it. In these times, many will say, in these years 1744 and 1745, in which so many Libels have been seen printed in contempt of the Holy Office, can timidity and prudence be flaunted? Amid so many circumstances is it written: *Father Concina trusts too much in the Wisdom of Men who prefer to incur the reproach of being timid than of being bold?* I wish to leave the public to entertain itself with this most noble ironic Paradox, so that I may begin again to explain to His Reverence what Books printed clandestinely are.

VI. Know, therefore, Your Reverence Father Lecchi, that to print a Book with the due licenses, with the Decrees of the Sacred Inquisition and of the Princes at its front, although one's own Name is not there, is not to print clandestinely. Read the Book of Piantamura, and at its front you will find both the Attestation of the Inquisitor and the Decree of the Prince; and Father Concina acknowledges such a Book as his own. Thus far, therefore, the blows of Your Reverence prove vain. What, then, does it

mean to print clandestinely? It means, Most Esteemed Father, to print without the due and necessary licenses; to print clandestinely means to print furtively in order to be able to strike blind blows by treachery, as you say very well. To print clandestinely means precisely to throw oneself into the woods in order to assail and kill without being caught in the act; and in order to be able to say: *The author is not one of ours; perhaps he is some Partisan of the Holy Habit, some Devotee too passionately attached to us*; and to deny being Authors of the printed Books even in a Tribunal, although caught with the Original of the printed Book in hand; and to confess that the Original upon which the printing was made is truly one's own, but that it was copied from another Manuscript; and to have a Portuguese Collegian leap upon the stage, who attests that he received the Manuscript from a distant Country. This is what it means to print clandestinely. Now, after Father Concina printed his *Lent Appealing against the Theological-Moral-Critical Dissertation*, which he truly believed to be by Signori Cappellotti and Casali, he saw himself assailed by the Book entitled *DEFENSE, etc.*, composed by Father Monti, according to what they say, and certainly caused to be printed at Lucca by the Reverend Father Cocconati: a Book filled with so many slanders and horrendous pieces of backbiting, so incredible that afterward it was said that this Book had not been published by some of *ours*. Father Concina, compelled by that Book to write his *History of Probabilism*, warned his Adversaries in that work to appear as honorable combatants with uncovered faces, so that concealment of their Name and Institute might not serve them as an occasion for striking blind blows by treachery. And if they had availed themselves of this most opportune warning, they certainly would not have published the Books written below. Father Concina believed that the most just threat of removing the mask from their faces would be sufficient to oblige them to moderate conduct. But he was altogether mistaken. Books - and what Books - have been printed clandestinely. Now Father Concina would have the right, *without fear that his severe Morality will suffer any loss*, to use the words of Father Lecchi, to publish the names and surnames of the Authors who here, in the course of only two years, have printed clandestinely. But to show how Father Concina, and I with him, are, thanks be to God, cautious observers of severe Morality, know that even now we do not wish to disclose them. It is true that you will baptize this omission as an ignorance of mine; and therefore I shall do this: I shall indicate the Books printed clandestinely, and of the Authors of these Books, who are certainly Jesuits, I shall indicate the first letter of the Surname. Let us therefore form the Index of the Books. The two *Salutary Notices*, first and second, prohibited by the Holy Office, were printed clandestinely with the date Naples, 1744, but printed at Rome in the printing house of Mainardi, to the great injury of that same Mainardi and with the death of poor Settari. The Author of these two *Notices* is Father F. The Book entitled *Judgment of a Certain Theologian to a Friend and Confessor* was printed clandestinely at Venice. The Author is Father T. The celebrated *Retraction*, condemned as a defamatory Libel, was printed clandestinely at Venice and then, within this year 1745, reprinted at Lucca. Of the unhappy and wretched Author of this *Retraction* I do not wish even now to indicate the first letter, although he has become known to me by indubitable proofs; and I remain surprised that by this time he has not been corrected by his Superiors. The Author of the *Little Whip*, published as a Manuscript at Perugia, is Father S. The Author of the *Literary News of Pistoia* is Father Z. I do not wish for now to draw the Catalogue out any further, being persuaded that this will be enough for you. Let His Reverence Father Lecchi see, therefore, what idea the public will form of him upon rereading this truly brilliant thought of his: *Father Concina trusts too much in the wisdom of Men who prefer to incur the reproach of being timid than of being bold.* Capers! Timid Men are those who, under the eyes of the Sovereign, have

apologies of Books condemned by the Holy Office printed! Timid, and also wise, Men are those who have Books condemned as defamatory Libels by the Holy Apostolic See reprinted in Italy itself! Believe me, Your Reverence, the very partisans and devotees who are not wholly prejudiced remain surprised at these transports of yours, which are too impetuous. Will you have still the courage to say that charity is lacking when things public by publicity both of law and of fact are made manifest? Do you comprehend from this with how much reason Father Concina desired that you appear in public with uncovered face?

VII. But permit me, Your Reverence, to disclose to you the origin of the error of some of you private Jesuits. Here it is. The Illustrious Society of Jesus, of which you are members, is one of the most Illustrious Religious Orders that adorns the Catholic Church. The spiritual advantages which, through its Apostolic Missions, Schools, Confessions, spiritual Exercises, Counsels, and Directions, it brings to Christianity justly acquire for it universal esteem, most powerful Protectors, and most committed Defenders, who, upon seeing the great good which the Renowned Society does, often innocently enter into the commitment either to defend, or to cover, or to support the false opinions of this or that person. Hence it is that these private Authors, knowing the great advantage of their own Religious Order, publish under its luminous shield defamatory Libels, little Books contrary to the very Pontifical Decrees, and whatever enters their heads. Indeed, what Religious of any other Institute would ever have caused the two *Salutary Notices* and the *Judgment* against the Decree of the Holy Office to be printed in Rome itself? Who would have caused the *Retraction* to be printed and, after its solemn condemnation, reprinted? I say nothing of the *Reflections* and so many other Books printed in another matter against the Pontifical Decrees. But I restrict myself to those printed in these days beneath our eyes. When such Books are refuted, at once there is shouting, there is declaiming that charity has been violated, respect lost, reputation injured, the glory of so illustrious a Religious Order obscured. And behold us reduced to one of these two extremes: either to allow the most pernicious opinions to run freely, or to appear as enemies and slanderers of the Venerable Society. Often confined between these two rocks, I went on thinking within myself: Is it possible that there is no just and safe road for defending the truth and making error known without running aground upon one of the two extremes? The wrong of the aforementioned private Jesuit Writers in their disputes with Father Concina - as much in the matter of the Fast as in the Touchings of the Breasts, and as much in Probabilism - is manifest and evident, as the two Papal Briefs in the Controversy of the Fast and the two Decrees of the Holy Office bear clear and irrefragable testimony: against the Pinchings of the cheeks and the Touchings of the Breasts of Nuns, and against the defamatory Libel of the false *Retraction*. Since, therefore, these private Writers do not cease to sing triumphs with grave prejudice to sound doctrine, and to publish Books and little Books to defend their opinions, is it possible, I said, that there is no manner of making the truth known without striking against either of the two extremes? And after serious thoughts, it seems that the solid and safe way would be to print the following Book, entitled *DEFENSE OF THE RENOWNED SOCIETY OF JESUS AGAINST CERTAIN OF ITS PRIVATE WRITERS*. It is true that Father Concina, in his *History*, volume 1, dissertation 2, chapter 5, section 5, from page 477, and in many other places, has already begun this undertaking by defending the Illustrious Society from the charge of Probabilism against Fathers La Croix, Fibo, and others; but this has not sufficed, and therefore it is necessary to do it in a more effective manner. In this way the truth will be placed under cover, a restraint will be imposed upon overly bold pens so that they may not enjoy the unjust license of lacerating the reputation of

others and promoting scandalous opinions beneath the mantle of the noble Mother; and finally the splendor of the Illustrious Society will remain preserved from the prejudices of the common people, who are accustomed most unjustly to ascribe to the entire Religious Order the faults of some private Jesuits.

VIII. Whoever, Lord Count, reads the Letter of the Reverend Father Lecchi addressed to you will praise the restraint with which it has here been answered. Whoever reflects upon this proposition of your Director: *Father Concina would show better sense by never again provoking them to give an account of what they do. He trusts too much in the wisdom of Men who prefer to incur the reproach of being timid than of being bold.* There is no need for us to give greater prominence to the timidity of these timid rabbits. The monuments which they have given us - I shall not say in past times, but in these very days - are so visible that, upon reading the proposition of the Reverend Father Lecchi, the public will be unable to refrain both from laughter and from admiration of these *timid Men*.

IX. Another insult which the Reverend Father Lecchi offers to the Author of the *History* is worthy of consideration. In various places in his *History*, Father Concina gives notice that he omits reporting many documents because they are odious. Father Lecchi writes thus concerning this in his Letter to the Lord Count, page 5: *With whom is this good Father taking issue so at random? We shall await these strange tidings with tranquility of spirit, without fear that his severe Morality will suffer any loss.* In order to speak without danger to severe Morality, I shall again on this occasion omit setting before you the manuscript documents belonging to this History, and I shall merely point out to you a certain Book published by the learned Cardinal Sfondrati, entitled *Gallia Vindicata*, where, in dissertation 1, section 8, page 466, you may, if it pleases you, read the Document reported there, and not a few others which you will find in that same Dissertation. Let Father Lecchi read this entire Document written in Latin by the celebrated Cardinal Sfondrati; and afterward, whether he wishes or not, he will have to confess our modesty. We have always separated the faults of Private men from the virtues of the Renowned Society; and to make this maxim of ours ever more manifest, we wish to confirm it by the authority of Sfondrati himself, who writes in his celebrated Book *Regale Sacerdotium*, in the Prelude, section 3, page 82 and following: *There will therefore be someone whom the desire to know will press: what part did the Religious, especially those of the Society, attached to Courts and ready for every wind, play in this scene? Various complaints about them are mingled in this history.* And after reporting various attestations of the Vicar General of the Church of Pamiers, which I judge it well to pass over, he begins to speak in this fashion: *Whatever may be said, we cannot be induced to call the Society itself into blame; nor indeed will he call it so who has considered in his mind the institutes of the Society, its prudence, and the benefits received from the Supreme Pontiffs.* And after a long discourse, quite significant and skillful, he concludes his section: *Therefore, what happened at Pamiers was the fault of some, which ought not to be ascribed to all. It has long since been defined in law that the offense of a Prelate does not burden the Church; how much less should the offense of a Rector, a Master, or another private individual disfigure the Society? What plant will you find among whose flowers and fruits a worm does not creep? Therefore we absolve the Society itself, not a few individuals from it - that is, the plant, not the worms - with whom you may be angry as you wish, provided only that its flowers and fruit remain unharmed and are not drawn into blame.* Supported by this most just maxim, we courageously refute the false opinions of those private men, who in our days seem to be many; and with equal constancy we shall remain unalterable venerators of the Illustrious Society.

Chapter III — Upon the First Three Warnings Concerning Father Lecchi's Notions of the Probable: His Bizarre Thoughts in Rehashing the Customary Little Distinctions and Probabilistic Formulas

CHAPTER III
REFLECTIONS
UPON THE FIRST THREE WARNINGS CONCERNING FATHER LECCHI'S NOTIONS OF THE PROBABLE: HIS BIZARRE THOUGHTS IN REHASHING THE CUSTOMARY LITTLE DISTINCTIONS AND PROBABILISTIC FORMULAS

I. In the proem to the first *Warning*, with certain maxims of the Poets, he trains his Lord Count for the arena. In section 1 he defines absolute probability, and immediately, prejudiced by common preconceptions, confounds it with Probabilism. In section 2 he would like his Probabilism to be different from that of the Academics, but he brings forward no other reason than this one on page 9: *You also know the very trite proverb that the fool is better in the affairs of his own house than the wise man in those of another.* I do not know how he can make use of this proverb without grave prejudice to himself. Is Probabilism perhaps confined to his own house alone? Does the meaning of this word *Probabilism* perhaps depend upon the particular considerations and circumstances of the Professed House? What he adds is still more vague: *Explaining what I understand in my concepts falls to me, who stand upon the defense of my doctrine. Therefore do not get the desire, in this first agreement of words which we are making, to draw me even a little into the midst of those Authors who have abused the word Probable.* Most Esteemed Father, this word *probable*, ever since it was born, was always taken in the same sense, down to the birth of Reflex Probabilism, which was born precisely in your House, invented by the famous Father Antonio Terillo and furnished with two laws, in itself and by accident, fabricated capriciously in God.

II. In section 3 he describes the prerogatives with which the most eloquent Father Segneri adorns Probabilism in his first letter. But Father Concina, in his *History*, volume 1, dissertation 1, chapter 2, section 1, proves to evidence that Father Paolo Segneri did not understand the state of the question, and that he expounded it perversely. It was your duty to defend this distinguished Man. But since you were unable to do so, with prudent judgment you do not say even a word about it. We shall speak later of your abandonment of this great Man, leaving him without defense.

III. He employs the second *Warning* in explaining solid Probability, since in the first *Warning* he explained loose Probability. What difference there may be between loose and solid probability, which you explain in two different articles, I certainly do not understand. Perhaps in the first *Warning* he explained absolute probability, and in the second respective probability. However it may be, the label is of little importance. He divides this second *Warning* into seven paragraphs, like so many ditches and earthworks of distinctions and subdivisions of words and phrases, within which his Probabilism goes on entrenching itself. I should be far too imprudent if I wasted time clearing away banks of clouds already dispersed so many times. In section 6, under the escort of Busembaum's Commentator, Father La Croix, he labors to color Probabilism with the diversity of the two opinions concerning the obligation to confess aggravating circumstances within the same species of sin. He passes it off as a matter beyond controversy that Saint Thomas denies the obligation to confess them, when there is a dispute among the Thomists on this point. But to make him touch with his hand that

he always walks wavering, now climbing upon one prop and now upon another, I transcribe the conclusion which he draws at the end of page 14: *But, recognizing at the same time the solid Probability of the opposite opinion, I would present my private judgment with that sobriety and measure which Cano used in this question: Indeed, in a very doubtful matter I would not satisfy myself if I explained only the circumstances which change the species of sin*. Thus your judgment is that the diversity of these two opinions generates a most grave doubt in the mind. And in this case certainly the safer part is to be chosen. For if, in a very doubtful matter, as Cano writes, the safer doctrine must be followed - in doubts the safer part is to be chosen - with good reason, and by force of geometrical reasoning, when more truth appears on one side than on the other, the more verisimilar must in such a conflict be followed. Should not the truth be followed if it were discovered? Therefore, in the hypothesis that the truth cannot be discovered, but that opinion is nevertheless discovered which is known to be nearer to the truth, as is the more probable, this must necessarily be embraced. And to pretend that, in a most grave conflict upon which eternal salvation depends and in which the truth is hidden, the opinion less near to the truth and closer to falsehood may be followed, is a Probabilistic paradox which engenders horror whenever it is represented in its true colors. As for the two opinions concerning aggravating circumstances, we all say that each has its probability, speaking absolutely. We do not condemn the person who, after diligent and dispassionate examination, follows the one which seems to him more probable. I judge, for example, the affirmative more probable, and I do not on that account condemn the person who judges the negative more probable. *Then you are in agreement*, the Lord Count will say. You are mistaken, Most Illustrious Master. Here the Probabilistic ferment does not lie, but in this other proposition: *I am convinced of the greater probability of the affirmative opinion, and nevertheless I repudiate this and myself embrace the negative, because it is more agreeable to my liberty.* And this is the paradox which we reprove. Your Father Lecchi, Lord Count, endeavors to dazzle you by arraying on one side Saint Thomas, Saint Bonaventure, Durandus, Silvester, Torquemada, etc.; on the other, Alensis, Suarez, Soto, etc. With the luminous opposition of these two contrary squadrons he dazzles your eyes, Lord Count, and conceals the Probabilistic deformity. But presently we shall reveal the whole picture in its true light and from the point of just perspective.

IV. Having raised doubled and tripled trenches of words of various meanings and of distinctions, at last, within the encumbrance, so to speak, of a cloud of words and explanations, he encamps and settles down to establish the state of the question in the third *Warning*. Once again, on page 17, he brings onto the field the two opinions concerning aggravating circumstances, placing Suarez and others on one side in favor of the law, and on the other Saint Thomas, Saint Bonaventure, and others like them in favor of liberty. Here I am constrained to say to the Lord Count: This escort of yours keeps the Probabilistic precipice hidden from you beneath the splendors of Saint Thomas and Saint Bonaventure, powerful Opponents of Probabilism. Concerning Suarez himself there is a strong dispute over which party he belonged to, as we shall say later. If you wish to know, Lord Count, what Probabilism is, turn your gaze away from the *Summa* of Saint Thomas, of Saint Bonaventure, and the like; and without so many subtleties take in hand the *Summa* of Father Escobar, or of Bauny, or of Diana, or of Tamburini, and there you will discern the Probabilistic force more favorable to human liberty than the Mississippi was to the greed of the young Merchants described above by Father Lecchi.

V. The suggestion which Your Reverence gives to your Lord Count on page 19 is very opportune. Thus you write: *Believe me, Lord Count, and, being the good judge of Men's dispositions that you are, you will see*

it put to the test. It happens in Probabiliorism as in many other usages. Many, if not all, run after the fashion. You will see certain men who know no further than the simple surface of this doctrine play the lovers of Probabiliorism; and, persuading themselves that they are so to the tips of their hair, they are anything but Probabiliorists. When afterward they find themselves pressed, as the saying goes, between the door and the wall, they open for themselves that single escape which had seemed to them impossible to practice; but then they call it the way of greater probability. Thus in practice they do the same thing as the Probabilists and only speak differently, tranquil, content, and even indulgent. Then cause them, in associating with others, to hear a hint of Probabilism: as a whistle changes the scene and introduces new characters, so you will see these men begin to thunder at once and, in spite either of their indifference or of their ignorance, make the show of one who sighs and raves and is devoured by zeal for severe Morality. These I properly call hypocrites of Probabiliorism. I do not say, however, that Father Concina is of such a kind.

VI. Very well, Most Esteemed Father: many, if not all, Probabiliorists you properly call *Hypocrites of Probabiliorism*. It is an incontestable fact that at present all truly learned and erudite Men, except the Jesuits - and not all of them - are enemies of Probabilism. And do you dare to pass off, in ridiculous terms and childish phrases, the wisest men of our Century as lovers of Probabiliorism, as hypocrites, and as frauds? Whoever reads these witty descriptions of yours will comprehend ever more fully the wisdom and gravity of your thought. With one of your customary little ironic figures you add: *I do not say, however, that Father Concina is of such a kind.* Let Father Concina be a hypocrite, as you say; let him be a scoundrel, as writes your other Associate, Author of the *Retraction*; let him be worse than Luther, as writes the other Confrere, Father Monti, in the *Defense upon the Fast*; let him be the worst man in the World: is what he has written perhaps false on this account? What do you say, Lord Count? Whoever among you other Cavaliers treated civil controversies in this fashion, would he be held an honest man? Is not this manner of writing a decisive argument of a most wretched cause? Probabiliorism is in fashion? Oh, the bizarre fancies of this Father Director of yours! The doctrine which puts a restraint upon human passions, which combats the usages of the world, which restricts liberty, which teaches men to fast, not to frequent spectacles, theaters, games, and nocturnal conversations, which teaches men to mortify the flesh, has never, Reverend Father, been in fashion. Do you know what doctrine is in the fashion of the World? That which teaches that meat may be eaten morning and evening in Lent because one is dispensed to eat it in the morning; which defends the Touchings of the Breasts of Nuns, without depraved intention, as indifferent or sub-obscene acts; which teaches that blaspheming and perjuring through habit bring with them no new malice; which admits to Confessions and Communions the Lords Counts, the Lords Marquises, and the Ladies Madams who are enamored - enamored not of Probabiliorism, as you write, but of Humanism. These and similar doctrines, which I could bring forward without number, are in the fashion of the World. But let us allow His Reverence to speak again; he continues thus on the cited page 19.

VII. *I do say that he - Father Concina - appears to have erred manifestly in the notion which he gives of the Probable in the Dedication itself and throughout the Book. Here are his words. The fundamental principle of Probabilism is that, when an opinion is supported by two or four Catholic Doctors, it may licitly be followed and practiced in the face of all the other Theologians of the Church, who with more evident reasons defend the contrary. Whom does he intend to strike with these blind blows? The Probabilists? Certainly not, for they are not included here.* If they are not included, why do they shout? Do you tear from the Dedication of the *History* the notion of Probabilism assigned by Father Concina? Does His Reverence Father Lecchi not distinguish the Notion of Probabilism from a fundamental principle upon which this Probabilism rests? One must

excuse him if, ignorant of these first elements, he immediately adds on page 20: *Thus, in reading this Work - the History - from beginning to end, it will seem to you, Lord Count, that you are walking upon sand and feel your leg broken, because it sinks and does not support you at all, not even a little.* And therefore, in order not to break your sturdy legs, you did not dare to enter into this Sand: you stopped upon the banks, on the nearer ground, at the Dedication, at the title page; you did not have the courage to go and investigate the Notion of Probabilism where Father Concina gave it, as will be demonstrated in the following Chapter. For now let us continue to transcribe some other fine thoughts of yours. Thus, then, you resume in section 1, page 20: *Indeed, to tell you frankly, I nearly took scandal at Father Concina, perhaps following the custom of Pupils. Whoever says fundamental principle of Probabilism means, in good language, a principle commonly adopted by the more distinguished Probabilists.* Precisely, Reverend Father: the principle indicated in passing by Father Concina in the Dedication is adopted by the more distinguished Probabilists - Terillo, Sanchez, Tamburini, Caramuel, Diana, Viva, Laymann, and innumerable other Disciples. Do you wish for their texts? Read them in the *History*, which you have dissimulated as usual. The sophistry against the word *evident* is unworthy of you. The evidence of truth is one thing; the evidence of the reasons which demonstrate the greater probability is another.

VIII. You employ the whole of section 4 of your third *Warning* in transcribing other reproaches hurled against Father Concina by the Reverend Father Master Carrattino concerning the *Discipline, etc., entirely full of strict morality for Cloistered persons, assailed not only with approval, but even at the impulse of his Superiors.* I pass over all the other impostures which you transcribe from the domestic Adversaries, of which we shall speak at the proper time; and I ask whether Your Reverence will be able to prove that these two Adversaries wrote not only with approval but at the impulse of their Superiors. Most Esteemed Father, you advance certain propositions which you will be able to sustain only with difficulty. You trust too much in the reports of some Friar, to make use of your customary courteous phrases. But whatever may be the case concerning this, I tell you in passing that you cannot censure the Morality of the *Apostolic-Monastic Discipline* as too strict without censuring your Most Glorious Patriarch Saint Ignatius for Rigorism, and your Holy *Constitutions* for rigorism. What does Your Reverence say? Do you see upon what rock you have run aground? For my part, I challenge you, and will demonstrate to you that the doctrine of the *Discipline, etc.* is incontestable and defended by your own Father Castro Palao. If you do not accept this challenge, what you write in your *Warnings* on this point stands convicted of falsity.

IX. Before finishing this Chapter of mine, I wish to transcribe another of your fine fancies which had escaped my eye because of the excessive speed with which I write and read your things. After you gave the explanation of the more and the less Probable, turning to your Lord Count you speak thus to him on page 15, *Warning* 2, section 6: *You have indeed been able to observe with what phlegm and moderation, having courteously taken Father Concina by the hand, I led him to the fact itself, and there, in the case set forth above, wished him at his leisure to turn and recognize what sort of probability was indicated by the words more probable and less probable.* Father Concina truly does not refuse to submit his hand to the Tutelage of the Reverend Father Lecchi. The public, however, will say that Father Lecchi could have done without displaying with such bravado the boast of guiding Father Concina's hand. For the rest, I excuse Your Reverence if, accustomed in the schools to guide the hands of young men masterfully, by force of this habit you wish to perform the same office with Father Concina, who will be grateful to you for this courtesy.

Chapter IV — Upon the Fourth Warning, Filled with Bizarre Suggestions

CHAPTER IV
REFLECTIONS
UPON THE FOURTH WARNING, FILLED WITH BIZARRE SUGGESTIONS. THIS OTHER CONFRERE, FATHER GHEZZI, CONFESSES THAT PROBABILISTS CARE NOTHING WHETHER AN ACTION IS GOOD AND MERITORIOUS OF PARADISE

I. This fourth *Warning* is divided into seven sections, through which I shall run swiftly. In the first, on page 23, he pauses to criticize that part of the title page of the *History* in which is written: *From the subtleties of the modern Probabilists the fundamental principles of Christian Theology are defended.* Here the Reverend Father Lecchi, turning to his Lord Count, begins to write thus: *This, you will say there, is a great lavishing of words at the first encounter; it is a wishing to sell, as the saying goes, the skin of the beast before having it in the snares.* And does Your Reverence not know that the Title Page is the last thing an Author makes? And that this is like the facade of a palace, which represents at a glance the greatness and magnificence of the same? Thus the beast was already in the snares when the skin was displayed. That there was then a great lavishing of words on that title page was your responsibility to prove. But instead of doing so, you transcribe another imposture from another cellmate and Adversary of Father Concina. You were already charitably warned of it by that pious cellmate, often recalled by us: *Their zeal is that of Zebedee, etc.* Whoever wishes more may read the cited page 23, where he warns that reasons must be distinguished from boasts.

II. He employs the whole second section against the same words of the title page just reported, and begins to speak in a much higher tone. His Confrere Father Ghezzi has likewise censured the same part of the title page, but by another route, and he has been fully satisfied, as may be read in the *Theological Examination* of his Book. I shall endeavor to satisfy the Reverend Father Lecchi also, as best I can. These are his words on page 24: *Let him consider that the same affront of censure - which Heaven forbid should ever happen; there is no fear that it will - were perhaps made by some rash Probabilist against him and against his so renowned School; and that this person had gone so far as to write a Book whose title was precisely this: From the subtleties of the Modern Predeterminists the fundamental principles of Christian Theology are defended. To such a title the response would be as follows.*

III. I shall excuse, my dear Probabilist, your simplicity. Your innocence, fasting from the controversies pertaining to Divine grace, makes you propose such a title page. Under this name of Predeterminists come the defenders of Divine grace efficacious by its own nature; that is to say, of Divine grace which has its efficacy from God, and not from infirm human choice. Now know, Lord Count, that this grace, which brings its efficacious power from Heaven and not from earth, has always been defended in the Church, especially by Augustine against the Semipelagians. In these latter centuries Father Luis de Molina was the first to invent a new modern system, glorying that, if Saint Augustine had known this system of his, he would happily have triumphed over his enemies, and that so many disturbances would not have arisen from Augustine's disputes. Read the text of Molina reported in the *Theological Examination* against Father Ghezzi. Know, Lord Count, that when this new Molinist system was published to the World, not only the Dominican Order but the foremost learned men of that century opposed it and regarded it as a dangerous invention, as may be read in the celebrated Letter of the

great Cardinal Baronius. Know, Lord Count, that the doctrine of the efficacy of grace by its own nature has been, and is today, defended by the most celebrated Schools of the Catholics, and in our days was praised by Benedict XIII with singular approval. Know, Lord Count, that however much some have dared to confound the aforesaid doctrine with the errors of the Jansenists, the Holy Popes, and especially the great Pontiff Clement XI, have always declared, to the confusion of those who spoke otherwise, that the doctrine of Saints Augustine and Thomas taught by the Disciples of Saint Thomas is not only superior to every censure, but is the ancient doctrine of the Church.

IV. This being presupposed, let His Reverence Father Lecchi now answer which fundamental principles of Christian Theology must be defended from the subtleties of the Modern Predeterminists. The indifference of created liberty under efficacious grace has been defended, and is defended, by the Predeterminists under the guidance of their Masters Augustine and Thomas. They have defended, and defend, the primacy of God from the subtleties of Middle Knowledge, with such valor that the learned Father Francesco Palanco, a luminous star of the Order of Minims and of all Spain, encourages the Thomists to defend the primacy of God the first Legislator from the subtleties of the intermediate knowledge introduced into Probabilism by Terillo, just as they defended the primacy of God the first Mover against the Middle Knowledge introduced by Molina. These are the words of Father Palanco, question 28, *On Conscience*, article 3, section 2, number 145, page 292: *This solution is against Saint Thomas and all his Disciples. I earnestly beg them all to observe that through Probabilism, and especially through this reflex law, a NEW MIDDLE KNOWLEDGE and a new use of it are gradually being introduced into the Schools, or, what is more considerable, into the governance of morals and of Christian life. And therefore, since they, as most faithful followers of the Angelic Doctor, received from him as a noble lineage the primacy of God in every order that implies perfection, it falls upon none more than them to fight piously against the MODERNS and always to conquer: just as in Speculative Theology they uphold the primacy of God in the character of Cause, Mover, Lord, and free Determiner, so in Moral and Practical Theology they must uphold the Primacy of the Divine law in regulating human morals.*

V. Here is the Parallel made between Middle Knowledge and Probabilism, made not by a rash Writer but by the great Father Palanco, who was, if I am not mistaken, a distinguished Bishop. Of this Palanco the learned Jesuit Father Camargo writes thus: *This Author, long united to me by familiar friendship, whom on account of his lofty genius, exquisite wisdom, distinguished piety, and the other gifts of his excellent mind I greatly honor and love, without any flattery, has in his truly outstanding work recently brought to light, entitled On Conscience, successfully attacked and conquered modern Probabilism throughout.* Controversy 10, page 267.

VI. Let us now allow His Reverence to recite his Aria, composed with great study, and place it in Father Concina's mouth with these words on pages 24 and 25: *Let the Father - Concina - put his hand to his breast, and he will withdraw it leprous. - By the grace of God it is most healthy. - I know that Father Concina sets himself expressly to show that he had a thousand reasons, both human and divine, which moved him to do this. - And is it not true, if your Father Monti sent him as an ignorant man to study the letters of Segneri, and because he obeyed you shout? - But let him reflect that the feigned Antipredeterminist could also, with the same measuring rod, pass off his measurements as just; let us suppose that this man had so hardened his brow that with that injurious title he dared to present himself before the Tribunal of Father Concina to obtain the imprimatur. With what gravity of words - listen to Father Lecchi's Rhetoric - with what severity of countenance would he be rejected and made silent by him? Who has elevated you, he would say, to a power hitherto unknown to the world, of censuring the opinion of*

a Catholic School defended by so many noble Writers? It seems Rash to you, and it seems otherwise to others; your Fancy is most foolish, by which you would wish to take your own reason as the compass and balance of the reason of everyone in so grave a controversy as that of efficacious grace. And what pleasure would Father Concina not take in hearing him plead, with that nerve of eloquence of his, in so just a cause? Know, however, Lord Count, that today among Writers, just as the barbarity of style has been softened and almost entirely removed, so has the harshness of censures. Literary contests have become more courteous, and only let it not be understood that the resentment of sprinkling the Adversary with a few tempered and urbane salts is forbidden, salts which do not embitter minds but only season reason.

VII. Father Concina would never call the aforesaid Antipredeterminist a fool or a rash man to his face, because he has never used, and never will use, formulas so rustic and so little Christian. He would rather call him a simpleton, fasting from the Controversy, as he has already indicated above. As for the rest, in calling Probabilism a fabric of subtleties filled with laxities, Father Concina did so supported securely by the authority not only of the gravest Theologians, but of Alexander VII, of Innocent XI, and of the whole Gallican Church. I shall place again before your eyes the words of the General Assembly - I shall not say National Council - of the French Clergy of 1700: *That therefore in practice it is lawful for us to follow an opinion which we ourselves do not judge should be chosen as the more probable: this is new, this unheard of.... This doctrine and consequence is the beginning of evils and the head of all the corruptions mentioned above*. The same Clergy declares that Pope Alexander VII, in that phrase *A new manner of opining has crept in*, mortally wounds Probabilism with the following words: *In this statement he complains not only that errors have increased, but also - WHAT IS CHIEF - he wished it noted that THE VERY METHOD OF TREATING THE MATTER had been introduced, from which we would see a corruption of Morals not only about to follow, but actually to break in as if by assault*. That Sacred Assembly repeats: *Nor did it suffice for the Most Holy Pontiff to expose this new method of trifling with conscience and enveloping truth - that is, the very source of the evil - but he condemned many propositions infected by the streams of the deadly doctrine flowing from it*.

VIII. I seem now to discern the Lord Count, inflamed with just indignation, turning against his Father Director and reproaching him in this fashion: Father, you go about hurling certain fanciful darts blindly. From Probabilism you leap to Predeterminism; you form certain hypotheses in order to call now this person and now that one rash and foolish, far too uncivilly, and then remain really defeated on the field. Your Adversary has thus far turned all your wittiest inventions back upon you. He retorted that of the Mississippi upon you in the most natural manner. He has marvelously turned that of Predetermination, with the authority of Father Palanco, back upon your shoulders. And he has justified his censures against Probabilism by the authority both of the Pontiffs and of the entire Church of France. In sum, he opposes authentic histories and facts to your capricious inventions. Therefore, if I see too many more of these, I immediately renounce your Tutelage.

IX. Lord Count, have a little composure, because you will certainly see worse things. For now continue to follow His Reverence, who says to you on page 26: *Lord Count, take care lest you owe Father Concina the thanks of the man who was helped to mount a horse with such fine grace that he came to leap to the ground on the other side. You will see yourself carried by Father Concina from Probabiliorism over into Tutiorism*. His Reverence continues to throw dust in the eyes of his Lord Count with his conceits about one who mounts a horse with too much swiftness and gallantry. A text from the *History* should have been produced to prove that Father Concina throws his Reader into Tutiorism. Tutiorism is that which

obliges one to discover a truth which cannot be discovered, and condemns as guilty of fault that Christian who invincibly does not know the obligation of the law. It does not excuse him from sin even when, after diligent inquiry, he acts persuaded by a most probable opinion. This is the condemned Tutiorism. The other species of Tutiorism which His Reverence invents are all his whims for entangling the truth and confounding sound doctrine with error. Therefore I pass over that heap of words with which he fills pages 26 and 27. He writes on page 28: *You see clearly here, Lord Count, that if these arguments and comparisons have any efficacy, they have it all to prove Tutiorism.* Lord Count, your Master entangles you. Father Paolo Segneri examined these comparisons and calls them Theatrical, which prove nothing, or prove Tutiorism. Read the first volume of the *History*, dissertation 2, chapter 2, section 8, page 375 through page 390, where you will find cleared away all those mists with which your Director seeks to cover the truth from you. You will find refuted all the sophisms produced by Segneri in a manner far more showy and insinuating than your Master has done.

X. The comparison which Father Lecchi makes on pages 29 and 30 between a text of Father Concina torn from the Preface and another taken from the Appendix could not be more bizarre. He objects that in the Appendix material fault is distinguished from formal. All Catholics, admitting that invincible ignorance excuses from the guilt of fault, admit that in this case the fault is material and not imputable. This is certain doctrine among all Catholics. In the text of the Preface reported by Your Reverence on page 30, the Probabilists are reproved because they exalt this material fault to the rank of a virtue meritorious of Paradise. And from this do you dare to infer that Father Concina has rushed headlong and skewered himself upon Tutiorism? You entangle your ill-fated Lord Count by representing as contradictory two texts, in one of which material fault is treated, while in the other it is examined whether this material fault is meritorious of Paradise. I shall indeed show with evidence that Your Reverence has rushed headlong into a noose which altogether strangles Probabilism.

XI. He writes thus on page 30: *Here it is not asked whether, by following the less probable opinion, I merit Paradise by the action. It is asked whether I sin or not. This, and nothing else, is the point of the dispute.* You repeat the same maxim on page 33, desiring that *the question be reduced to the single point of lawfulness, without bringing in the other point of merit, which is entirely foreign to the controversy concerning the Probable.* Very well, excellently. Where, then, the many Christians whom you direct by Probabilism are to arrive after death matters nothing to you, is that not true? It is asked whether they sin or not. For the rest, whether they merit Paradise or not does not belong to the good Probabilist to investigate. The cause of eternal glory is a foreign dispute for the Probabilists. *This is not the point of the dispute*; indeed, *it is an entirely foreign point.* But what ever will your Lords Counts, your Lords Marquises, and your Ladies Marshals say upon reading these doctrines of yours? Therefore, they will say, is it entirely abstracted from whether our actions of so many years under the direction of Probabilists are, or are not, good for Paradise? Therefore, in directing us by the Probabilistic rule, do they take no care to conduct us to Heaven, but only not to precipitate us into Hell? Where, then, do they wish to conduct us? To Limbo? No. Where, then? Is this point of merit *a point entirely foreign to the Probabilistic cause*?

XII. But let us leave aside Counts and Marquises, and restrict the discourse between the two of us. You, Most Esteemed Father Lecchi, reproach Father Concina for not having properly set forth the state of the question. But you never advance any proof of it. Now I shall bring forward the proofs of your understanding. You would indicate the doctrine of Father Concina, which teaches that truth alone is the rule of an honest action. Thus you write on page 30: *Indeed, a Probabilist could take THE*

WHOLE AND ENTIRE doctrine of Father Concina concerning the Rule of merit and make it his own without any disadvantage, without the least incoherence in his own system. I am certain, Most Esteemed Father, that your Probabilist adherents will say aloud that you are both fasting and innocent of the substance of this Controversy. You wish truth alone to be the rule of the honest and meritorious action, and then you wish to defend Probabilism! Do you wish to sustain this Centaur, this chimera, this monster? For now I do not have time to make perceptible to you the repugnance of this maxim of yours; but I am certain that all Probabilists truly understanding their cause will deride it as an unheard-of paradox. Do you know that your great Father Terillo, Prince of the Reflex Probabilists, employed a large part of his two volumes in fabricating in God a law by accident, to which the materially evil action conforms? Your distinguished Father Antonio Casnedi, Author of five folio volumes in defense of Probabilism, writes in the very Dedication TO JESUS CHRIST of the second volume that so great is Your Mercy that it has raised Probabilistic Error upon a Throne equal to that of truth. These are his words: *Although You are the Master of truth, You condescend so far to human ignorance that, in Your Tribunal of truth, blameless ERROR is EQUATED with truth itself. You do not accuse it but excuse it; You do not prefer truth, but make error EQUAL, by holding the law itself as no law and YOUR NO LAW as LAW, if LAW is invincibly proposed as NO LAW, and NO LAW as LAW.* The celebrated Commentator on Father Busembaum, Father La Croix, who in order to give all the Probabilistic essence to the World wished to enclose the marrow of Busembaum in only two volumes, follows the doctrine of Casnedi. These are your standard-bearers and princes of Reflex Probability. You, as one little armed with the Probabilistic equipment, found yourself entirely surprised upon reading in Father Concina how monstrous is the Probabilistic Doctrine which defends adulteries, thefts, perjuries, etc., represented less probably as honest, as meritorious of Paradise. Therefore, filled with fear, you abandon the standards of your Probabilist Heroes and have recourse to ask quarter from Father Concina on that point which concerns the rule of the honest and meritorious action. Your other Colleague, Father Bovio, does the same in part 2, chapter 5 of his *Dissertation*. But Father Concina cannot honorably receive you unless you make yourselves perfect Deserters. These three Milanese Theologians, Ghezzi, Lecchi, and Bovio, frightened by the *History of Probabilism*, have abandoned the Terillos, the Casnedis, La Croix, and so many other Captains of Probabilism, because they have not yet been able to find a little distinction capable of covering the horror of the doctrine of the aforesaid Reverend Fathers Casnedi, Terillo, La Croix, Busembaum, Tamburini, Sanchez, and so many others.

XIII. Still more luminous appears the skill of the Reverend Father Lecchi in reproaching Father Concina because, in the Appendix at chapter 5 and elsewhere, he admits the distinction between material and formal sin, while afterward he derides it in the Probabilists with open contradiction. Father Concina, as has been said, admits with the Catholics material fault when the ignorance is really invincible. It is then called invincible when, after all morally possible efforts have been employed, it cannot be overcome. And such is the ignorance of one who, under the due conditions, follows the more probable opinion, in the event that it should be false. The invincible ignorance of Probabilism is monstrous and astonishing, and repugnant to common sense. What is more repugnant than ignorance and knowledge, light and darkness? Yet Probabilism combines these two extremes together. I transcribe a few words from the cited chapter of the Appendix to the *History*, volume 1, page 644. He writes thus: *You are persuaded that the more probable opinion is the one which maintains that it is never lawful for servants secretly to steal from their masters in order to compensate for the wage which they judge ought to be greater than that agreed upon for their labors. But because the contrary opinion accommodates you more,*

reflecting that it is supported by some modern Theologians and consequently reputed probable, you embrace this second and repudiate the first; you steal as much as suffices to compensate the just wage.... Let us suppose, then, that the opinion less probable in comparison with the more probable, both in the matter of secret compensation by servants, in the matter of contracts, and in any kind whatsoever, is false. In this case you really transgress the natural and divine Laws. Probabilism attests to you that this transgression of the Law is only material; it assures you that you do not sin. I do not sin? And for what reason? Because invincible ignorance excuses you. But how can my ignorance be called invincible - exclaims the Lord Count - if I presently judge it more probable that the secret compensation of servants is a culpable theft, that the contract is usurious, that the occasion is sinful? With this more resplendent light, with this more convincing knowledge, is mine ignorance, and invincible ignorance?.... I ask that a categorical answer be given to this petition of mine. If I presently know it to be more probable that my action is sinful, how is it ever possible that my ignorance is invincible? Who can ever defend that this ignorance, which REJECTS THE MORE PROBABLE KNOWLEDGE, which is rebellious against the light, excuses me from fault if I err? Who can defend this? Probabilism is what passes such a doctrine off to you as secure. COME NOW, if Probabilism teaches this, I reprove it as an unheard-of invention, as a dangerous reef.

XIV. Here I hear the Lord Count, wholly inflamed with indignation, turn against his Father Professor. And where, Father, are honesty and good faith? In the Chapter of the *History* cited by you, Probabilistic ignorance is depicted as the most monstrous thing in the world. Father Concina asks for a categorical and precise answer concerning this horrid compound of invincible ignorance with the more probable knowledge of sin, and you dissimulate the whole of it? And what is worse, you tear a text from the end of the same chapter and join it with another in order to throw dust into the eyes of us others who have little practice in such a cause? Let us allow the Lord Count to vent himself; and with all composure let us say that His Reverence really ought to have had a little regard for himself and not to have exposed himself so openly to the indignation of the public. The Author of the *History* has proved to you that the sin committed in contempt of the greater probability is almost a sin against the Holy Spirit, a sin of true malice; and without answering any of his arguments, do you oppose to him that he admits the distinction between material and formal sin? In order that the sin may be material, it is necessary that the ignorance be truly invincible. It has been proved that Probabilistic ignorance is not invincible but most vincible, and is a manifest rebellion against the light. Therefore the sin is not material but most formal. You, Father Lecchi, did not know how to answer anything, although provoked to answer the doctrine brought forward. Therefore, by your tacit confession, your cause is lost. It takes something else, Most Esteemed Father, than a little Dramatic display, a little Mississippi, a little carrying Tutiorism upon one's back, and similar little things, in order to write in this matter.

Chapter V — Upon the Fifth Warning: Father Lecchi's Good Faith Is Called to Examination for His Silence About the Two Principal Notions by Which the Author of the History Represents the Horrid Portrait of Probabilism

CHAPTER V
REFLECTIONS
UPON THE FIFTH WARNING
FATHER LECCHI'S GOOD FAITH IS CALLED TO EXAMINATION FOR HIS SILENCE ABOUT THE TWO PRINCIPAL NOTIONS BY WHICH THE AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY REPRESENTS THE HORRID PORTRAIT OF PROBABILISM

I. The title of the fifth *Warning* is this: *The false ideas of Probabilism scattered in several places of the History are refuted.* The Warning is divided into eight sections. Everyone here expects Father Lecchi to set about examining the Notions, or ideas, which the Author of the *History* gives of Probabilism. He promises as much in his title, and Father Lecchi was indispensably obliged to do as much, as we shall say hereafter. Now, in order that the public may know the good faith and the manner of proceeding of certain Probabilists, I am under the necessity of transcribing from the *History* almost the entire section in which the said Notions are deliberately given. The fact is of the highest importance, as will be seen, and therefore it must be rendered perceptible. In dissertation 1, chapter 1, section 2, the famous picture of Probabilism is painted. And so that everyone may see it, the said section bears this title: A SINCERE AND DISTINCT NOTION OF THE LESS PROBABLE OPINION IN COMPARISON. The content of that section is this.

II. *In my judgment there is no argument stronger or more valid for refuting the less Probable opinion, in comparison with the more Probable, than to paint it in its natural and living colors. Its mere appearance is so horrid, when cleared of those colored clouds within which its Defenders go on wrapping it, that it alone suffices to obtain universal abhorrence for it.*

III. *FIRST NOTION. Sempronius, a Merchant of good mind and good will, doubts whether it is lawful for him to make a contract from which he hopes to draw profit. He consults ten Theologians. Seven of them, with very strong reasons, condemn the contract as usurious; the other three defend it as lawful. The reasons of the seven appear much more powerful, not only because of the authority of the greater number of those who allege them, but also because of their intrinsic force. Wherefore, both by way of reason and by way of authority, he judges that the contract is usurious and prohibited by the Divine Law. But upon reflecting on the other three Theologians who defend the contract as lawful, and although Sempronius judges it more probable that these three speak falsely, he nevertheless carries out the contract as lawful.*

IV. *SECOND NOTION of Reflex Probabilism. Sempronius, who fears God, is invited to make a contract which he doubts to be infected with usury. As far as his charity permits, he examines the reasons of one side and the other, and consults some of the most learned Theologians. Twenty Doctors attest to him that the contract is usurious. They set forth their reasons, and to him these appear stronger and more convincing. He therefore likewise judges that the contract is usurious, and refuses to make it. Sempronius presents himself to a Probabilist Confessor, who speaks to Sempronius in this fashion: And why do you fear to carry out this contract? Are you perhaps unaware that there are seven Doctors who defend the opinion that the contract is lawful and free from usury? I know it, replies Sempronius. But twenty Theologians affirm that it is usurious, and their reasons seem to me more probable. What does that*

matter? rejoins the Probabilist Confessor. You are permitted to embrace the less probable opinion. May I then, replies Sempronius, follow even that opinion which I judge false? Certainly, replies the benign Confessor, because you rest upon the Probability of the contrary opinion, although it is lesser. And can it ever be true, exclaims the God-fearing Sempronius in complete astonishment, that, in order to carry it into effect, I must make a contract which I judge tainted with usury? Ah, why so many fears? replies the Probabilist Confessor. You, O Sempronius, have no just reason to fear, because that judgment of yours arises from the direct principles concerning the honesty of the contract considered absolutely. Now with that judgment of yours that it is usurious, you most excellently couple another judgment brought forth from reflex principles and regulated by Probability, though lesser, and favorable to the honesty of the contract. Be gone, Father, concludes Sempronius, with these reflections of yours, which I do not understand, nor do I care to understand them. I know for certain that the contract which I directly judge usurious is not lawful for me. Come now, raises his voice the benign Confessor, awaken once and for all, O Sempronius, and be of good heart, while I seek to drive every scruple from your mind. That first direct judgment of yours, since it is not evident but opinative, is under your control. You must therefore suspend it for a little while, until you complete the contract. But, if you please, Sempronius begins to speak again, what comfort and what help can that suspension of judgment ever bring me, if meanwhile I know that the authorities and reasons which demonstrate the usury of the contract are both stronger and more convincing? Behold, O Sempronius, the great mystery at last unveiled, concludes the benign Confessor. For a tranquil calm and complete security of your conscience, you have nothing else to do but divert your mind a little from the consideration of those reasons and authorities of yours which represent to you the usury of the contract, and fix it upon the Probability of the contrary benign opinion. Can an easier and sweeter means be found? I break off the thread of the reasoning, lest the thought occur that I am writing a Satire. But the truth is such, if the native countenance of Probabilism is represented without cosmetics. I break off this thread, lest it seem that a Satire has been written. But such is the matter if it is presented to judgment without disguise. This is the sincere portrait which the learned Jesuit Egidio Estrix has formed of Probabilism. Nor have I done anything other than render his Latin text in the vernacular.

V. *Father Ignazio Camargo reports this whole discourse of Father Estrix as a genuine image of Probabilism. And this simple painting suffices by itself for a valid refutation of the same. Whoever suspected that the description adduced was satirical would show that he was ignorant of the state of the Probabilistic question, or would indispensably have to condemn it: These things set down by the most acute Father in the work praised above, since they are a most faithful and bare expression of the benign opinion, are nevertheless sufficient, and an exceedingly effective refutation of it. To whomsoever they seem a Satire, he by his own judgment accuses and condemns the benign opinion and its artifice.* It is true that the portrait is monstrous; but when it is natural, the evil must be made to redound upon the original alone, not upon the painter. Now all the Probabilists are challenged to discover a single false color in such a portrait.

VI. These are the Notions which Father Concina gives of Probabilism in his *History*. He reproaches the Probabilists with the horrid portrait. He challenges all the Probabilists to censure it. And all remain mute as fishes? That is not enough. Four Reverend Jesuit Fathers appear in the field to combat the *History of Probabilism*, and not one has dared to attack the two Notions given. That is little. The Reverend Father Lecchi has gone a little farther. Hear how he begins the fifth *Warning*: *That the Author of the History has badly proposed the state of the question will be something we shall have to repeat a hundred times. But what else can be done? It is well known that the truncations, irregularities, and all the defects of a great building are always measured and verified with the rule in hand.*

VII. The public here will expect you, Reverend Father Lecchi, to show that the state of the question just described is false, chimerical, calumnious. The challenge made to you by Father Concina obliges you. The reproach which you make against him a hundred times, that he has not sincerely set forth this state of the cause, has placed you under the indispensable necessity of doing so. And in this entire *Warning*, in which you propose to refute *the false ideas scattered in several places of the History*, you do not say a word about it! Not only do you make no mention of it in that whole *Warning*, but not even in the entire Book! What will the public ever say of you, of your sincerity, of your good faith? What do you answer, Lord Count? Now I too am beginning to touch with my hand that certain Probabilists write certain little Books as fodder for the devout, and in order to be able to say: A reply has been made. Let it be added: Badly.

Chapter VI — Upon the Same Fifth Warning: Father Lecchi's Good Faith Is Again Called to Examination

CHAPTER VI
REFLECTIONS
UPON THE SAME FIFTH WARNING
FATHER LECCHI'S GOOD FAITH IS AGAIN CALLED TO EXAMINATION

I. This fifth *Warning*, as we have said, is divided into seven sections. In the title the Author proposes to refute the false ideas of Probabilism scattered in the *History*. It has been seen that he says not a word concerning the two Notions in which Probabilism is deliberately painted. In the first section of this fifth *Warning* he reproaches the Author of the *History* for having written in the vernacular tongue, because the present controversy concerns only Theologians and Confessors. Who was the first to introduce this controversy to the judgment of the people in the vernacular tongue? That great Man Father Paolo Segneri, who, in refuting a Latin Book of his own General, ought to have written in Latin. Who caused these vernacular Letters to be reprinted clandestinely? I do not know. Who extols them, who promulgates them? I am silent, and let the fact speak. Who printed a good part of Moral Theology in *Chamber Entertainments* together with a book of Lenten sermons? Who has printed in these days the *Salutary Notices* in the vernacular tongue in reply to Father Concina's two Latin Letters against the impure, condemned doctrine of the Touchings of the Breasts? And after facts so manifest and so recent, is this key touched?

II. In the second section he complains that in the whole first Dissertation no notion of Probabilism is given. His Reverence is mistaken. The natural and plain idea, intelligible to all in a few words, is given in the very Preface and throughout the Dissertation. Everywhere it is said that in disputes there are two probable and verisimilar opinions, the one more, the other less: the Probabilists desire the less verisimilar, and the Probabiliorists the more verisimilar. Thus it is spoken everywhere. Father Concina did not wish at the very beginning to confuse the minds of the Readers with a heap of Probabilistic subtleties; but he wished only to give those first outlines which suffice for a Historian. Then, when he undertook to dispute Theologically against the three Letters of Father Segneri, before anything else he paints Probabilism for us with all the colors and shadows; and he makes it appear as what it is, a monstrous portrait. And he executed it with such naturalness that all you other learned Gentlemen have not deigned to reveal the imposture in his misrepresenting it, although challenged. What do you answer? Then, whoever desires to know how precise Father Lecchi is, let him read on page 36, in the margin of section 1, where he writes: *The first notion of Probabilism is refuted.* And he cries out because Probabilism has been refuted together with Laxism and Benignism. But let him cry out against so many Councils which call it so.

III. In section 3 he calls to severe criticism a proposition torn from the middle of a section of the *History*, where the gross errors of Father Segneri in separating the Probable from the verisimilar are refuted. Here I know nothing else to do but beg our courteous Lord Count to read that section of dissertation 1, page 364 and following. The things which he reheats in both the third and the fourth section are so insipid that I do not have the patience even to report them. I shall transcribe only one from page 40. *Come, let us finish once and for all. Who told you that the less probable opinion is that which is*

absolutely less near to truth, when one always speaks of an opinion supported and opposed by grave Authors? His Reverence is somewhat heated; let us calm him with our phlegmatic composure. Behold, Most Esteemed Father, whether what the Author of the *History* writes is true. *When the World hears: it is lawful to follow the less Probable opinion, it discovers nothing horrid or dangerous in it. But when it hears: in doubtful controversies and disputes upon the points of our eternal salvation, it is lawful to follow the opinion which is less near to truth, it immediately remains astonished and perceives the horror.* His Reverence hurls himself against these words, writing that Father Concina acts the Dramatic Poet and represents the Probabilists as those madmen who close their eyes before the Sun: *We do not desire knowledge of Your ways.* Let us see whether this is true. Say, Your Reverence: is it not true that both the Probabiliorist and the Probabilist go in search of truth in doubtful disputes? You must affirm it, unless you wish to say that they go in pursuit of falsehood. Is it not true that Probability is an appearance of truth? All agree. Therefore greater probability means a greater appearance of truth; a greater appearance of truth therefore means a greater nearness to truth. Lesser probability means a lesser appearance of truth; therefore a lesser nearness to truth. In the face of these first lights of common sense, you, Reverend Father, cry out: *Come, let us finish once and for all. Who told you that the less probable opinion is that which is absolutely less near to truth?* Common sense tells me; the evidence of the matter tells me. *But one speaks of an opinion supported and opposed by grave Authors.* Very well: let it be supported by the gravest Authors, not merely by grave ones; admit the hypothesis that it is truly less Probable, and it is necessarily less near to truth. Is there an answer? Is there an evasion? It causes horror to the Reverend Father Lecchi to hear that it is lawful to follow the opinion less near to truth. Therefore, on Father Lecchi's own confession, Probabilism is a horrid doctrine. Your Reverence sees how the use of one word rather than another sometimes serves to uncover the horror of a system. Oh, how much harm these *Warnings* do to your cause, because they will provoke Readers to read the *History of Probabilism*, in which they will find your Cause completely defeated and your *Warnings* wholly beating the air.

IV. You write on page 42: *You see that here nothing else is done but to play blindman's buff.* From the time I began to study Probabilism, I saw that this maxim of yours was true: the Probabilists play blindman's buff. Let us continue to transcribe the text. *Where* - Father Lecchi rejoins - *where do I say that in gravely doubtful matters one embraces what is nearer to truth? Let Father Concina point it out to me, and then I shall be bound to embrace it.* What is more probable is, absolutely speaking, nearer to truth with respect to that intellect to which, after serious examination, the opinion appears more probable. If you wish to know, Lord Count, how strange the whole discourse of your Father Director is, consider that the very state of the cause is: *Whether, in the case in which the human intellect finds itself between two opinions, the one more and the other less probable, it ought to adhere to the former rather than to the latter.* Now set yourself, Lord Count, to read without astonishment, if you can, that other period which your Father Director writes on the same page 42: *But what Author of note among the Probabilists ever declared that it is lawful to follow what is less near to truth?* I answer that all the Probabilists without exception teach this. I omit reporting Terillo, Laymann, and so many others of the foremost, who teach that it is lawful for you, Lord Count, to teach, counsel, and follow that opinion which you speculatively judge false. I omit all this, and say that all Probabilists, by following the less Probable, follow what appears to them less near to truth. This is an incontestable fact, and by casting it into doubt you show that you understand nothing of your cause.

V. The fourth Notion, which in section 6, page 45, he sets about refuting, is quite bizarre. He cries out that the Author of the *History* calls Probabilism *favorable to flesh and blood, a system which favors the appetites*. Those expressions which convey to the ear the true meaning of Probabilism, and those colors which represent its natural countenance, deeply wound the heart of His Reverence. Tell me, upon your faith: why do the Probabilists call Probabilism the benign opinion, and Probabiliorism the rigid, austere opinion? Does the less Probable opinion perhaps repress the flesh with fasts, with penances, with hairshirts? Does it perhaps crucify covetousness with speedy payments, with abundant alms? Does the opinion which teaches that one may eat meat morning and evening when there is a dispensation, etc., favor the spirit or the flesh? Does the opinion which defends the Touchings of the Breasts of Nuns, whether as indifferent acts or as venial faults, apart from a depraved intention, favor Angelic purity or human flesh? Does the opinion which exempts the habitual blasphemer and habitual perjurer from a new guilt of malice favor the spirit or the blood? Oh, the great amplification which I could make here! You Probabilists wish to impose upon the more verisimilar opinion a horrid countenance of rigid and austere, and you would have the opinion nearer to falsehood walk with the gentle, amiable countenance of benign. Father Concina has demonstrated by most evident reasons that the benignity of the less probable opinion is a carnal benignity, never a spiritual one.

VI. The Reverend Father Lecchi finishes his fifth *Warning* by bringing back into the field the Praises of the two cellmates who have been seen constrained *to cast into the fire the rod of this Censor.* Thus it is done when the cause is desperate. Those who seek to promote the observance of Christian and Monastic Discipline are called defamers of their own Mother. O times, O morals! A time will come when you shall be answered as is fitting.

Chapter VII — Upon the Sixth and Seventh Warnings: The Reverend Father Lecchi Is Compelled to Recognize Probabilism as False and Erroneous

CHAPTER VII
REFLECTIONS
UPON THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH WARNINGS
THE REVEREND FATHER LECCHI IS COMPELLED TO RECOGNIZE PROBABILISM AS FALSE AND ERRONEOUS. HE, HIS FATHER GHEZZI, AND FATHER DE-CAMPS, WHILE FREEING FATHER SÁNCHEZ FROM HAVING TAUGHT THE CONDEMNED OPINION IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS, THEMSELVES DEFEND THAT SAME CONDEMNED OPINION

I. Upon this sixth *Warning* I do not wish to say many words. I shall transcribe only the gallant Praise which you bestow upon the *History of Probabilism* in the introduction to your first section, page 48, of this sixth *Warning*. Thus, then, you write: *But before putting off from shore with a larger company than usual, I shall disclose to you, Lord Count, the delicate artifice by which it clearly appears that the History of Probabilism was meditated and brought to perfection. That immense medley of texts, citations, and criticisms, which, when considered scattered throughout the whole work, represent to your mind neither art nor design, no differently from painters' aprons or their palettes stained at random with every manner of color, nevertheless, when viewed from the point of their perspective, where our Writer's aim lies, you will perceive little by little taking shape and figure; for all those brushstrokes which, considered each by itself, seem cast there at random, are drawn with much regularity between these two Master Lines. The one consists in coloring before the eyes of the common people a certain abstract idea of Probabilism without restraint and without bounds, with an interminable horizon in which the law, conscience, and every good custom are lost from sight. The other artful brushstroke is employed in order to make it appear the unhappy Father of all those relaxed opinions which are encountered in Authors both ancient and modern, and especially of those which were at various times condemned by the Supreme Pontiffs.* I, who know how Father Concina composed his *History* with great rapidity, that is, in the space of only seven months, with complete plainness and without any other design than to narrate the truth and defend sound doctrine, did not believe that there was so much art within it. One must indeed confess that the simpler truth is, the more brilliant, majestic, and admirable it appears. Wherefore, giving you thanks for the Panegyric, I pass to something else.

II. Enough has been said about the Probabilism of the ancient Thomists in the *Theological Examination* against Father Ghezzi's Book. I shall say only a few words in passing. In section 1 you complain that the Probabilism which Father Concina combats is not that which is defended by the Probabilists. But this is a radical falsehood. I beg the Reader to run through the third Dissertation of the *History*, where the words and arguments of the modern Probabilists are reported. Your demand on page 52 that Father Concina should have distinguished two Probabilisms, the one innocent and the other perverse, is a worthy invention of yours. These are your words: *In proper fairness you could distinguish two Probabilisms, the one innocent and the other perverse. The first, surrounded as by a hedge with wise laws, and defended for a long time in the Thomistic School. The second, as he thinks, without restraints and without bounds.* I form a single Syllogism, by which to demonstrate that the Reverend Father Lecchi is forced to confess that the Probabilism taught by his Probabilists is perverse. Here is the first proposition, an undeniable fact. Father Concina refutes that Probabilism which is taught by the Reverend Fathers

Terillo, Segneri, La Croix, Viva, Sánchez, Tamburini, and others like them. I invite the public to read the third Dissertation of the *History*, in which the very words of Segneri, Terillo, and La Croix, who speak in the name of all the Probabilists, are extensively reported. This Probabilism refuted by Father Concina is called monstrous and perverse by the Reverend Father Lecchi in several places, especially on pages 50, 51, and 52. Therefore the Reverend Father Lecchi is compelled to recognize as perverse the Probabilism refuted by Father Concina. The whole difficulty is reduced to the major, that is, to the first proposition. Now I defend this as infallible. And the public will immediately remain convinced of it. It is an undeniable truth of fact that Father Concina has painted the Probabilism which he refutes with the very words of Segneri, Terillo, and La Croix. Anyone may read the said third Dissertation. It is likewise a most evident fact that the Reverend Father Lecchi not only does not refute, but does not even mention, the many demonstrations by which Father Concina manifests the horror of the Probabilism taught by Terillo, Segneri, and La Croix, who speak in the name of all the Probabilists. Therefore Father Lecchi by his silence recognizes as monstrous and perverse the Probabilism taught by Segneri, Terillo, La Croix, and Viva, who speak with the voice of all.

III. I advance to the seventh *Warning*, in whose first section you make the distinguished Doctor Francisco Suárez a Disciple of Medina, from whom you report a text concerning absolute Probability which is altogether foreign to the question of Probabilism. You, Most Esteemed Father, continually confuse absolute probability with probability in comparison. You produce Father Suárez in the first place as a Doctor of Probabilism. Yet Father Ignazio Camargo writes that he had ready, as far as I remember, about forty texts by which to demonstrate that Father Suárez is opposed to Probabilism. I do not wish to set about discussing this fact; it is certain, however, that Father Suárez did not deliberately examine this Controversy, and therefore is unjustly produced by Your Reverence as one of the Captains of Probabilism. Let the great General Tirso González be read, and it will be seen with what boldness Father Lecchi imposes upon the public. At least cite this distinguished Doctor as doubtful. No: at all costs Probabilism must be accredited.

IV. In this same section, page 60, you write thus concerning Medina: *Medina does not prescribe boundaries for his Probabilism, so far as concerns the Judge and the Sacraments; indeed, in the First Part of the Second Part, question 19, article 7, sections 3 and 4, he declared that Probabilism has a place in all affairs, even those of great moment, and to the greatest injury of a third party, and in matters of the Sacraments.* When you transcribed this text, you did not have before your memory what you wrote in the sixth *Warning*, page 52, namely, that the Probabilism taught by Medina is the innocent Probabilism. *This is the device*, you write there, *by which that celebrated Doctor marked true Probabilism.* Let us argue a little. Father Medina's Probabilism is true Probabilism. Father Medina's Probabilism is lawful in all Sacramental or judicial matters, etc. Therefore true Probabilism is lawful in every matter. I know very well that in your Probabilistic arsenal there is no lack of distinctions by which to entangle the most evident Demonstrations. Not only Medina, but about seventy and more of the most celebrated Doctors recognized this truth: that Probabilism is either lawful in every matter or in none. All the disparities invented by the Moderns are evasions and capricious inventions, as has been proved in the third Dissertation of the *History*.

V. You employ section 2 uselessly in demonstrating that Father Suárez was a supporter of Probabilism, although, as I have already said, he certainly did not discuss that Controversy. And in order to obtain credit for your Probabilism, already condemned by the entire Church of France, you

do not care that you obscure in some part the splendor of that distinguished Doctor. Father Vázquez, whom you cause to leap upon the Stage in section 4, was perhaps the first among the Jesuits to have treated deliberately the question of Probabiliorism, and at the same time to have defended it. In section 5 you pass to the defense of Father Sánchez, introducing yourself with these words on page 66: *The skillful circuit made by us to comprehend the mind of Vázquez will serve us as the sling whose many turns give it greater force to strike solidly at Father Concina's error, who, in running through, as it superficially appears, the works of Father Sánchez, has not only misunderstood his legitimate Sentiment, but imputes to him an entirely different one, contrary, false, and erroneous.*

VI. Father Concina read Father Sánchez at the source; he understood him; he did not impute to him any false and erroneous sense, but wrote that the said Father, in the doctrine concerning the administration of the Sacraments, teaches the Proposition condemned by Innocent XI. You, Most Esteemed Father Lecchi, from not having read, I believe - for if I were to say from not having understood it, that would be too much - the condemned proposition, have innocently precipitated yourself into the condemned error, and in order to defend the glory of Father Sánchez you obscure your own. To the proofs, without so many slings and so many turns.

VII. This is the condemned proposition: *It is not unlawful in conferring the Sacraments to follow a probable opinion concerning the validity of the Sacrament, leaving aside the safer opinion, unless law, agreement, or the danger of incurring grave harm forbids it. Hence a merely probable opinion must not be used in the conferral of Baptism, priestly Order, or episcopal Order.*

VIII. This is the doctrine of Father Tomás Sánchez, book 1, *On the Decalogue*, chapter 9, number 32. *Eighth, it is inferred what must be said in the question whether it is lawful in the administration of the Sacraments to use the less probable and less safe opinion when the validity of the Sacrament is at issue. Some judge this unlawful, and that the safe course, in which no danger of invalidating it threatens, must always necessarily be embraced, etc.* Number 33: *Yet although this is Probable, I nevertheless judge it more Probable that in the administration of the Sacraments it is lawful to use an opinion less Probable, the MORE PROBABLE and SAFE one being left aside, notwithstanding the danger of invalidating the Sacrament, with two limitations. The first is that it be in a matter which is not contrary to the common usage of the Church prescribing that the Sacraments be administered in that manner and not otherwise. For this reason, in book three On Matrimony, disputation 20, number 4, we said that it is a mortal sin to embrace a probable opinion concerning the forms and matters of the Sacraments, leaving aside those which are certain and prescribed by the Church; this arises not from a defect of the opinion, nor by reason of the danger and irreverence of the Sacrament, but because the custom of the Church, which has the force of a precept, is contravened. The latter limitation is that the less safe side, although it may be more probable, should not violate the obligation of charity and mercy respecting the remedy of one's neighbor, as we shall explain in the following number. This opinion is defended at length and excellently by Vázquez, Salón, Sayr, and certain modern Doctors. And the reason is that, with these two limitations, no other ground of fault can be found in following a probable opinion except either by reason of irreverence to the Sacrament or by reason of the danger of invalidation. But neither ground entails fault. Not the former, because there is no irreverence to the Sacrament in administering it with the danger that it may be invalid, by following a probable opinion. For so long as someone follows a probable opinion, he prudently judges that this is a fitting manner of administering it, and that he contravenes no precept and does not invalidate the Sacrament. Therefore, just as one who probably believes that something is not contrary to a Divine precept, and does it on that account, by no means inflicts injury upon the Divine precept, so neither does he inflict it upon the Sacrament, because he probably believes that this is a prudent*

manner of administering it. Nor does the latter ground entail fault, because although there may be danger of invalidating the Sacrament or of frustrating its effect of grace, this can also happen when someone embraces an opinion which seems more probable. And in order to act rightly, and lest a man be judged culpably to expose himself to danger, it is enough that he do this with a prudent assent dictated by probability that it is lawful and that the Sacrament is not rendered invalid.

IX. Thus it is most evident that Father Sánchez maintains that the use of the less probable opinion in the administration of the Sacraments is lawful under that title which concerns irreverence toward the Sacraments. But it is likewise the case that the condemned proposition maintains that the use of the less probable opinion is lawful with the very same limitations as Father Sánchez, namely, that it not be contrary to charity, to law, or to the danger of harming one's neighbor: *unless law, agreement, or the danger of incurring grave harm forbids it, etc*. You yourself, Most Esteemed Father Lecchi, confess this on the cited page 66. Afterward, declaring that he follows entirely the distinction of Vázquez cited there, he expounds his mind in two assertions. At number 33 he sets about proving that the law intimated to Priests to follow the safer opinion in the administration of the Sacraments is not founded upon the title of the reverence due to the Sacraments: *This opinion is defended at length and excellently by Vázquez*. But then, at number 34, he demonstrates that this law is founded upon charity toward one's neighbor.

X. Now let Your Reverence hear my consequence with peace and tranquility. Therefore not only Father Vázquez, not only Father Sánchez, but also Father Niccolò Ghezzi, Father Sanvitale, and Father Lecchi, as defenders of Father Sánchez and Father Vázquez, teach the condemned proposition. I prove this consequence. The condemned proposition comprises the very same limitations as Father Sánchez. Who says so? The condemned proposition itself, in which the use of the less Probable opinion is affirmed to be lawful *unless law, agreement, or the danger of incurring grave harm forbids it*. Hear the explanation of Father Domenico Viva, of whom I shall speak presently: *Or unless Obedience, Justice, or Charity forbids it, BUT RELIGION ALONE DOES NOT.* Fix your eyes, Father Lecchi, upon the condemned proposition, and you will see that your Conscience will oblige you, together with your other Confreres, to retract the doctrine condemned and defended by you. And in this you will imitate your celebrated Probabilist, the Reverend Father Giovanni de Cárdenas, who, in his Volume upon the condemned propositions, dissertation 2, chapter 3, number 33, pages 52 and 55 in my copy, writes thus: *Although in the place cited I taught that one does not sin against reverence toward the Sacrament, but only against charity and against Christ's institution that the fruit of the Sacrament is not to be impeded, insofar as the faithful are deprived of the fruit of the Sacrament, the matter having been considered better, I now assert that it is a mortal sin not only by this title, but also because it is against reverence toward the Sacrament*. The place cited, where he had taught the condemned doctrine, is his *Theological Crisis*, part 1, treatise 1, disputation 15, chapter 4, article 11, where he had written in favor of Probabilism and had fallen into the condemned error. Afterward the Decree of Innocent concerning the condemned propositions appeared, and the worthy Probabilist retracted. Observe from this, Father Lecchi, how true - most true - is what Father Concina writes so many times in his *History*, namely, that the Probabilists, as the Decrees against the condemned propositions, legitimate daughters of Probabilism, have been published, have either retracted or medicated Probabilism with the ointment of some condition.

XI. But because you are a Father who yields to evidence only with difficulty, I wish to produce for you another witness greater than every exception. This is Father Domenico Viva, who, although with

industrious diligence he seeks to soften the condemned Opinions, nevertheless judges this one so evidently condemned, not only as regards charity but also in relation to Religion, that he does not exempt even those who receive the Sacraments. Therefore, after reporting the Authors of the condemned opinion, he writes thus in number 9, page 11: *Nevertheless, I judge it must be said, with Suárez, Soto, Valer, Henriquez, and others commonly, that in conferring a Sacrament the use of a probable opinion, leaving aside the safer, is unlawful, also on account of the reverence due to the Sacrament; and therefore sin is committed not only against charity but also against Religion by exposing the Sacrament to the danger of frustration.* He adds in number 25 that the same opinion is implicitly condemned with respect to those who receive the Sacraments: *Whence that opinion also seems implicitly proscribed which had several Patrons in Sánchez.* Therefore, when in Father Viva you read that the Authors of condemned opinions are reported with those fine phrases *in Sánchez, in Tamburini, in Diana*, you must understand that Sánchez, Tamburini, and Diana teach the condemned opinion. Thus it has happened that I have found it whenever I made the comparison. Do so yourself, and you will observe that it is so. But let this be said parenthetically, given the occasion presented by the phrase *in Sánchez*.

XII. It therefore remains proved to evidence that you, Most Esteemed Father Lecchi, in defending that Father Sánchez does not teach the condemned doctrine, yourself defend, although contrary to your intention, the condemned error. And here there is no escape. Either you must retract with the pious and learned Father Cárdenas, or declare yourself a defender of the condemned proposition. Let Your Reverence now go and write to his Lord Count, page 68: *Lord Count, I do not tell you to believe me more than Father Concina. I ask you only to compare the original texts, and then believe yourself and your own eyes.* Thus does one write when one knows that the Lord Count will never take the trouble to make such comparisons, and in order to be able to say, according to the ancient custom: A reply has been made. Hence it is that such glorious boasts are passed off with strokes of a free pen. The text which you report from Father Concina in section 7, page 69, is most true. Father Sánchez teaches Probabilism in all its breadth by virtue of the system. Then, because of some circumstance, he restricts one or two of the many propositions which derive from it. By virtue of the Probabilistic system, *the Physician does not sin against the obligation of justice owed by the office of Physician by using that probable opinion, but against the charity which is owed.... Just as we have said in a similar case concerning the minister of the Sacraments who chooses the less probable opinion.* In the matter of the Sacraments Father Sánchez certainly teaches the condemned opinion; now he professes to speak of the Physician as he spoke of the Minister of the Sacraments. Nor is there any other difference except that the probable opinion concerning the Physician is not expressly condemned in some particular proposition, but is only reproved, so to speak, by the common consent of the human race.

XIII. *As a valiant Theologian and acute Dialectician*, you write on pages 70 and 71, *Sánchez understood perfectly well that the principles of the Probabilistic System, in that state of the question which he had established following Medina, have no connection whatever with the ability to follow the less probable opinion in the administration of the Sacraments, in the medication of bodies, or in the matter of justice.* But it is likewise the case that you yourself, in the immediately preceding *Warning*, on page 60, write of Father Medina that he extended Probabilism *to all affairs, even those of great moment, and to the greatest injury of a third party, and in matters of the Sacraments.* Therefore, if according to you Father Sánchez followed the Probabilism of Medina, he followed it in all its breadth. Let this be said in passing to point out to you one of your many contradictions.

XIV. I do not pause upon the examination of the three sections 9, 10, and 11, where you report the Letters of Saint Francis de Sales in praise of Valerius Reginaldus, Lessius, and Toledo, because enough has already been said elsewhere about those Letters. I would be inclined to pause upon the final, eleventh section, where by main force you wish to make Cardinal Toledo a Probabilist. You report two texts concerning the Confessor, that he ought to absolve the penitent who holds an opinion contrary to the Confessor, because the penitent deems his own more probable; in which case, had you read the many Antiprobabilists who teach this, you would not have dared to make Cardinal Toledo a Probabilist in the face of this universal doctrine of his: *In this opinion, concerning which there is not so great an agreement of Doctors regarding the obedience to be rendered to laws, nevertheless the safer side must be held.* Book *On the Instruction of Priests*, chapter 20, number 6. For the rest, make Cardinal Toledo a Probabilist for yourself, and even all the Jesuit Theologians, if it so pleases you; Probabilism will not thereby become true doctrine. Only two other words concerning Father Sánchez. You write on pages 77 and 78 that Father De-Camps affirms that Vázquez and Sánchez teach that the use of the less Probable opinion in the administration of the Sacraments is not lawful, and then you conclude thus: *Great misfortune for an Accuser always to see before himself the irrefragable witness of his wrong.* And who, Father, is this irrefragable witness of his wrong? The text of Sánchez? No. For it is most manifest that he teaches the condemned opinion with the limitations contained in that same condemned opinion. Who, then, is this irrefragable witness? The Jesuit Father De-Camps, equivocal defender of Probabilism? Do you produce this Author as an irrefragable witness in this cause? Oh, you are indeed, to make use of your phrase, the good Father. I have already proved against this other Associate of yours that Father De-Camps erred in various things in his little Work *Question of Fact*; and now I add another most manifest error, namely, that of freeing Vázquez and Sánchez from having taught the condemned doctrine. Now confess, Reverend Father Lecchi, *For the Greater Glory of God*, that great is your misfortune in seeing always before you the irrefragable witness of your wrong. And what is of greater consequence, your wrong concerns condemned doctrine. Thus you are obliged to retract and to confess publicly that the use of the less probable opinion is condemned because of the danger of rendering the Sacrament null.

XV. To this seventh *Warning* you make an Addition, in whose first section, page 79, you weave a panegyric to Father Concina, in whom you discern *the conduct and the skill of a veteran Writer, who is always accustomed to keep courage, valor, and good faith alive and ready in his Readers.... It was therefore shrewd counsel to dissemble for a good while the position upon which Medina with his Thomists, and SUÁREZ with his Followers, had entrenched themselves from the beginning of this Controversy. But why do I say dissemble? By an enchanted effect of his eloquence he has taken them from the sight of his Readers, transported them down below, and placed at their head a certain Probabilism.* Thus you have nothing else of which to accuse Father Concina except that, at the beginning of his work, he did not entangle the minds of his Readers by arraying before their eyes that whole immense medley of distinctions, subdistinctions, and probability direct, reflex, real, putative, authentic, solid, slight, moderate, absolute, certainly probable, probably probable, speculative, practical, practico-practical, by accident, of itself, and similar other subtleties? He did not wish to do so, as was said to you above, because he wished first to enlighten his Readers with simple, plain, and natural ideas; and then, after he had well established them in the sincere and genuine state of the controversy, he advanced to expound all the most profound, refined subtleties of the Principles of Probabilism. At the beginning of the work he represented Medina as the Inventor of the system. Father Suárez he has always venerated and defended, wherever the occasion arose, from

the Stain of Probabilism. If by sheer force, against the most learned Jesuits, you wish to make him a Probabilist, Father Concina will give him to you.

XVI. Once again in section 2 you touch again upon the text, that only halfway through volume 1 of the *History* is the natural picture of Probabilism set forth. And I must repeat to you that you have dared neither to examine nor to demonstrate the falsity of that truly monstrous picture set forth in chapter 1, section 2. A decisive argument that you recognize it as legitimate and sincere. Direct your blows against some Reflection. In section 3 you confess that the ornaments are reported with which the Probabilists strive to embellish their picture and cover its deformity. And because you are in the dark concerning what the Prince Terillo teaches about the certainty of the practical dictate, with too much simplicity you ascribe to error the statement that the Reflex Probabilists desire the morally certain dictate. In section 4 you raise your voice because it is written in the *History* that not all the Probabilists admit the ornaments of the conditions reported. But your error is made manifest by reading the Probabilists. You cry out more loudly in section 4 because it is said in the *History* that the conditions assigned in the abstract are not observed in practice. And I reply that not only are they not observed, but I add that their observance is impossible. The use of the less probable opinion in comparison is evidently repugnant to so many Councils, in which it has been condemned, as appears throughout the Church of France; to so many Canons which prescribe: *In doubtful matters the safer side must be chosen*; to the Fathers, to the Scriptures, and to the Constitutions of the Religious Orders, as has been demonstrated in the two very long Dissertations 2 and 3. And against so many demonstrations do you not reply with even one word?

Chapter VIII — Upon the Eighth Warning: Concerning the Authority upon Which Probability Rests

CHAPTER VIII
REFLECTIONS
UPON THE EIGHTH WARNING
CONCERNING THE AUTHORITY UPON WHICH PROBABILITY RESTS. VARIOUS INGENIOUS THOUGHTS OF FATHER LECCHI ARE REPORTED

I. Your eighth *Warning*, divided into twenty sections, is longer than the others, but my reflections will be shorter. I pass over the first six sections, as all beside the point. In them things are discussed which do not immediately concern Probabilism. In section 6 you do not admit that Artisans, Merchants, Bankers, Ministers, and Christians can provide themselves with a *Marrow*, a *Century*, etc., as a rule of their conscience, and, without consulting other Theologians, may choose the opinion which they find most suited to their interests. You are astonished at this. But is it not true that, according to Sánchez, Tamburini, Terillo, Viva, and so many others, every Christian may go in search of a Casuist Theologian until he finds one to his taste? He may rest in the opinion of a Theologian who has not printed, and who ordinarily is less learned than Escobar, Diana, or Tamburini; why, then, may he not turn through Diana, or Escobar, or Leander of the Most Holy Sacrament, and choose, among so many opinions in almost every controversial matter, that opinion which agrees most with his interests and which is either defended as Probable or represented in these Books as defended by others? I would like you to give me some clear and precise answer. You say on page 94 that such Books written in the Latin language do not suit the common disposition of men, and much less the capacity of the common people. Very well. At any rate they will suit all those who understand the Latin language well. Besides, many of these Summaries, such as that of Father Sebastiano Abicù, that of Coriglia, that of Rodríguez, and very many others, have been translated into the vernacular tongue. Thus it is necessary for you to set yourself to studying some other answer. I likewise pass over eight other sections in which you defend Sánchez and Laymann, because the things which you object there have already been fully refuted in the *Theological Examination* of your Father Ghezzi; and by what I shall now say, the whole matter will be placed in greater light.

II. The remainder of your *Warning* is entirely employed in defense of a doctrine of the Most Learned Father Domenico Viva, from whom Father Concina reported the following sentence: *Only in this case can the opinion not only of several Authors, but even of one Author, be admitted as probable, although he holds against the common opinion of the others.* You here assert that the sense is truncated, and you are right. And if Father Concina had deliberately omitted the following words of Father Viva, *whenever the Author is above every exception*, he would be guilty of infidelity and of having reported a truncated text. But I prove with evidence beyond reply that these words were omitted accidentally by the Printer, since twice, not once, they are reported in the vernacular language by Father Concina immediately before and immediately after Father Viva's text. I transcribe the whole text of the *History*, volume 1, page 196: *Father Viva restricts the sense of the condemned proposition to some second-rate Junior who is moderately learned. Otherwise, if the Modern is VERY LEARNED AND ABOVE EVERY EXCEPTION, in this case the Modern alone can render an opinion Probable even against the common opinion of the other Theologians. Only in this case, etc. Now, according to Father Viva and the Probabilists, a Modern Author ABOVE EVERY*

EXCEPTION is without doubt Father Sánchez, Father Castropalao, and others like them. Everyone here sees that this passage supposes, and expressly says, that Father Viva speaks of an Author *above every exception*. Thus it is evident that the Author of the *History* did not fail in sincerity, since he reported twice in the vernacular the Latin clause accidentally omitted either by the Copyist or by the Printer. And as regards the fidelity of the Texts adduced by Father Concina, neither you nor all your other fellow soldiers have been able, among so many hundreds which he produced, to find a single one that was not reported with complete fidelity. He may have erred in the interpretation; but in faithfully transcribing them, he used every possible diligence. He read them all in their sources; and when he could, he caused them to be compared by Friends, for fear that his own eye might have erred. Your Father Monti also reproached him for having reported truncated texts in the *Appealing Lent*. But in the *Apologetic Dissertation* the impostures of that Father were made known with evidence.

III. As for Father Viva's meaning, you may indeed entangle it, but otherwise it is too evident. You rewrite the reasons by which he confirms his theses. You warn the Lord Count that, in order for the Modern Author to be *above every exception*, he must be skilled in natural and positive law: *One who is very skilled both in natural and in positive law.* Good heavens! This is a most important clause. As if there could be a Theologian of Evangelical Morals above every exception and at the same time ignorant of natural law! If you please, let Your Reverence tell me: is not the Decalogue, which is almost the whole of Christian Morals in its substantial points, a matter of natural law? And do you wish a Theologian to be conceivable who is above every exception and who is not very skilled both in natural and in positive law? Believe me, Your Reverence, those who read such judgments as you make of Father Viva remain astonished. But since you censure the Author of the *History* for having been sparing in rewriting Father Viva's texts, I wish to be a little more liberal with you. Father Viva, therefore, in the immediately following number 7, adds.

IV. *Hence it follows that someone may consult several learned men until he finds someone who excuses him from the obligation, for example, of making restitution or of fasting, as Sánchez teaches in book 1, chapter 9, and as Palaus, Zimi, and not a few others teach, as reported by Machado, volume 1, Practical Discourse 7. The reason is that it is lawful for everyone to use his own right and to be freed from obligation through a lawful and honest means; such a means is to consult various Doctors in order TO FIND A FAVORABLE OPINION. This, however, must be done in such a way that the authority of the Doctor favoring liberty is of as much weight as the authority of one Author must be in order to render an opinion Probable AGAINST THE COMMON opinion of others. Therefore the authorities, reasons, and foundations of the others must be reported to him orally or in writing, if they are unknown to him, so that they may be skillfully refuted; otherwise the excuse will be null before God.*

V. In number 6, therefore, Father Viva establishes that a Modern furnished with the prerogatives indicated can give an opinion against the common opinion of the Doctors. Immediately afterward, in number 7, he reasons thus from this established principle: hence it follows that a Christian may consult many of those learned men, that is, those who hold against the common opinion, until he finds someone who exempts him from the obligation, for example, of making restitution or of fasting. Good heavens! These are two weighty and important points. For the rest, it is not very difficult to find many of these learned, indeed most learned, Juniors who free Christians both from Fasting and from restitution. Father Tommaso Tamburini, as one skilled in natural and divine law, is above every exception. Now he teaches a *favorable opinion* concerning restitution: *If the Confessor foresees that the penitent will not make restitution if the nullity of the title which the penitent believes to exist in his*

favor is disclosed to him, then, according to Sánchez, such nullity need not be disclosed to him by the Confessor when he is not asked, although it is to the prejudice of a third party, who will be deprived of what is his own. Book 3, *Method of Confession*, chapter 4, number 5. He adds in the following number 6: *And, according to De Lugo, all these things hold even when the Confessor expects that the penitent would indeed receive the admonition, but nevertheless perceives that the remedy is extremely difficult*. The conclusion which he draws from these and other similar fine doctrines, which Father Tamburini teaches in the places cited, is most marvelous: *Let this be noted especially for the Confessors of MERCHANTS AND PRINCES*. In the same place. Father Zaccaria Pasqualigo frees about fifty classes of Christians from Fasting. And Father Domenico Viva frees women who have begun their fiftieth year. Thus bad debtors who believe that they possess titles for not paying may, by Tamburini's doctrine, be admitted to the Sacraments. Those who desire to possess titles for not fasting should go to consult either Father Leander, or Diana, or Pasqualigo.

VI. You, Most Reverend Father Lecchi, become indignant upon reading such things; but blame no one other than yourself, for you constrain me to rewrite such little doctrines. Nevertheless, console yourself that you will share in the reward which we shall certainly obtain if, with purity of intention, we cause similar doctrines to be held in horror. Believe me, Your Reverence, it offends the Christian ear to hear that one may go in search of many Doctors until one is found who teaches a *favorable opinion*. Those appendages which you rewrite do nothing to temper the evil aspect of the maxim. For if it is lawful for the Christian to go in solicitous search of those living Theologians who are reputed to direct with *favorable opinions*, much more will it be permitted to turn through a Diana, a Tamburini, or a Castropalao in order to find a *favorable opinion*; and it will be found without much labor. All the more so because, in order to hear confessions, what Books do the Reverend Father Probabilist Confessors read, if not Viva, Castropalao, Diana, La Croix, Pasqualigo, Leander, Sporer, and Father Kilian Kazenberger?

VII. But so that the Christian Reader may not uselessly lose time in reading the refutations of the defenses of your Casuists, I wish in passing to indicate the maxims of the Fathers, which are manifestly contrary. Hear what Saint John Chrysostom writes, or whoever may be the Author of the *Imperfect Work*: *If, when about to buy a garment, you go about one merchant and another, and where you find a better garment and at a lower price, you buy from him, ought not the people to go about all the Doctors and inquire where the SINCERE TRUTH OF CHRIST is sold, and where the CORRUPTED truth, and choose the TRUER with greater care than a garment?* Homily 44 on Matthew. Do you hear how different the language of the Fathers is from that of Father Viva, Father Sánchez, and Father Tamburini? The Fathers desire that the truer opinion be sought: THE TRUER, not the favorable opinion. I could produce for you here the texts of the other holy Doctors, but the volume would increase greatly. Read the eleven long sections of dissertation 5, chapter 5, of the *History of Probabilism*.

VIII. Truly glorious is the boast which you make to your Lord Count in section 19, page 112, where you write: *But what will you say, Lord Count, when I demonstrate to you in clear terms that Father Concina did not understand his Melchior Cano? Oh, you will laugh at the amusing reversal, that over Father Concina's sown field there passes that great wheel which just now he pretended fell upon that of Viva.* Father Concina did not understand Cano, because, having reported an absolute, true rule of his which is commonly received by all, he did not proceed to discuss Cano's particular opinion concerning the form of Matrimony as a Sacrament. This truly is a reproach worthy of Father Lecchi. But how many Writers give excellent general Rules and then, in particular consequences, recede from them? But if you, Lord Count, wish

to touch with your hand how alert and penetrating your Father Lecchi is, read what he himself writes on this same page. He writes that Cardinal Pallavicino narrates that Cano's opinion *was scarcely tolerated and was chastised by many with censorial reproof*. Cano's rule transcribed by Father Concina is this: *To contradict the concordant opinion of the whole school of Theologians concerning faith or morals, if it is not heresy, is at least proximate to heresy.* Is this maxim not true? Does it perhaps become false because Cano opposed it in the matter of the form of Matrimony? What is more, do not you, Most Esteemed Father Lecchi, write that Cano attempts to prove that such an opinion is held by many and great Writers? Therefore, by your own confession, Cano does not intend to defend an opinion contrary to the common opinion of Writers, but only to that of the Schoolmen. If I wished to set all your contradictions in view, what a bulky volume I would form! You conclude section 19, page 114, thus: *I do not adopt Cano's singular opinion.* But you adopt Viva's singular opinion. You reply: *I only report it, so that it may appear how appropriately Father Concina avails himself of such a testimony against Father Viva.* And I only report these words of yours so that it may appear how far, in all your difficulties against Father Concina, you wander from the truth. Father Concina reported against Father Viva Cano's Rule received by all. The difficulty which you introduce here concerning the form of Matrimony has as much to do with our controversy as crabs have with the Moon. You know how to oppose to Father Concina nothing but things disparate, foreign, and altogether inept. And in those very things your error is evident, and you give the Adversary a constraining occasion to remind you of things most displeasing, but nevertheless salutary to true doctrine.

Chapter IX — Upon the Ninth and Tenth Warnings: Various Sophisms and Retortions of Father Lecchi's Arguments Are Refuted

CHAPTER IX

REFLECTIONS

UPON THE NINTH AND TENTH WARNINGS

VARIOUS SOPHISMS AND RETORTIONS OF FATHER LECCHI'S ARGUMENTS ARE REFUTED. IT IS PROVED TO EVIDENCE THAT, BY FORCE OF REASONING, PROBABILISM IS CONDEMNED IN THE PROSCRIBED MAXIM: THE GREATER PART DRAWS THE LESSER TO ITSELF

I. You employ a great part of the ninth *Warning* in interpreting the Decree of Alexander VII. Since upon this point you advance substantially the same things which Father Ghezzi first published in his *Dialogues*, I refer you to read what was answered to him, so as not to repeat the same things. It is enough only to remind you of the distinction between express and definitive condemnation and condemnation by identity of reason and deduced by way of correct reasoning. Setting aside for now, therefore, any further words upon the Decree of Alexander VII, I wish to demonstrate to you with such evidence that Probabilism is condemned by identity of reason that all you Probabilists together will never answer anything solid. Here is my reasoning. It is a truth of faith that there is a precept to embrace the truth when one can. Have you anything to oppose to this first proposition? To the second. It is doctrine condemned by the Church that he who cannot fulfill the whole is not obliged to the part: *He who cannot recite Matins and Lauds, but can recite the remaining Hours, is bound to nothing, because the greater part draws the lesser to itself.* By virtue of this proposition it is proved to you that he who can observe abstinence from meat in Lent is obliged, being healthy, to fast in the evening; for this reason, that he who cannot pay the whole must render to his creditor that greater part which he can. You gentlemen Probabilists, with your customary little distinctions, sought to elude the evidence of this doctrine; but the Most Wise Reigning Pontiff BENEDICT XIV, by two Briefs and most recently by a solemn Pastoral, has prohibited the practice of the erroneous opinion which maintained that one could eat supper in the evening. I know that in Spain it is sought in the customary manner to render the Pontifical Briefs fruitless. In Sicily it is publicly said that the Holy Father, by a *Viva-Voce Oracle*, declared that his Briefs do not bind under grave sin. If you desire authentic documents of this fact, I am ready to give them to you. And I shall tell you the name of the Jesuit Father residing in Rome who is cited in Messina as a Witness of this *Viva-Voce Oracle*. I shall also tell you something of what is preached in Dresden upon this subject. This little game of the *Viva-Voce Oracle* has frequently been practiced. Strict reasoning does not admit so many digressions. It is true. Let us therefore argue with that strict dialectic of which the Reverend Father T., with Rectoral authority, says that we are deprived. It is therefore a truth established by the Church that he who cannot fulfill the whole must fulfill that greater part which he can. This proposition is likewise undeniable. To the third. Therefore he who cannot fully fulfill the precept of finding and practicing the truth is obliged to follow that greater probability of truth, that greater verisimilitude, which he can. Therefore, when two opinions present themselves to your mind, one of which you yourself directly recognize as more probable, that is, more verisimilar and nearer to truth, you are obliged to embrace it. If you knew the truth with evidence, it is a truth of faith that you would be bound to embrace it. Therefore, when you cannot

fully execute this precept, you are bound to practice that greater part which you recognize as nearer to truth. Whenever you practice the less Probable opinion, you necessarily recognize the opposite as more Probable, these being two opposed relatives, of which one cannot subsist without the other. You can execute this more Probable part, as you in fact execute it in judgments and in the administration of the Sacraments. Therefore either you must deny that he who cannot fulfill the whole is bound to the greater part which he can fulfill, or you must concede that, in the conflict of two opinions, you are obliged to follow that which you directly judge to be the more probable. You, Most Esteemed Reverend Father Lecchi, may repeat your customary bizarre speculations which you advanced four years ago to defend the two meals of meat in time of fasting with respect to the healthy person who has a dispensation. You may entangle the matter by saying that the precept of truth is indivisible and admits no parts; that when the truth cannot be known clearly and the matter with evidence, it is reduced to the Probable. You may repeat with your Reverend Father Ghezzi that it matters nothing to the good Probabilist that the proposition be directly true, but that it is enough that it be possible. These and similar little things you may oppose; but you will never answer anything solid. I do not wish to enlarge this argument further, because of itself it strikes the eyes.

II. The maxims of Melchior Cano which you report in sections 4 and 5 are altogether beside the point, and therefore I pass them over. The conformity which in section 6 you represent to us between Father Terillo and Melchior Cano is one of the most bizarre fancies of your *Warnings*. You write on page 115: *Who more than Terillo is a Zealot for sound Morality? Who is harsher in reproving a fashion so pernicious? But at the same time, what Writer is more subtle, more cautious in producing the true origins?* I ought to continue transcribing various other passages from Terillo which you allege there; but in a few words I wish to place in my Reader's hands a decisive, insoluble, incontestable argument of the abuse which you make of another's credulity. Almost half a volume of the *History of Probabilism* is employed in showing that Father Terillo, a Theologian otherwise acute, pious, and learned, printed, in the Probabilistic controversy, incredible paradoxes both in doctrinal matters and in matters of historical fact. He invented astonishing doctrines and narrates things more than fabulous. He writes that within the space of thirty years innumerable Moral Theologians, blinded by ambition and deceived by Satan, *deceived under the subtle insinuation of SATAN*, promulgated scandalous opinions; and he cites all these deceived Theologians as his Masters and Approvers of Probabilism. The courteous Reader is requested to run through chapter 5 of the second Dissertation of the *History of Probabilism* in the first volume, where in several sections the incredible paradoxes and fables of Father Terillo, both doctrinal and historical, are proved by evident demonstrations. Let the whole third Dissertation of the said *History* be read. Of all this you, Reverend Father Lecchi, do not say a word. But you merely write: *Who more than Terillo is a Zealot for sound Morality?* If these *Warnings* of yours were to fall only into the hands of certain partisans of yours, who read nothing except your things, you could venture upon similar assertions; but you see well that a printed Book is readable by all. Now those who have read the *History of Probabilism* will say within themselves: How? Father Terillo's Probabilistic doctrines are produced in the aforementioned *History* under monstrous views; the accounts advanced by him are represented as fabulous. Father Lecchi knows all this, and does not seek to defend this Prince of the Probabilists? He does not even say a word about it? Indeed, what surpasses all belief, he represents him to us as the greatest Zealot for sound Morality? What credit, then, does the Reverend Father Lecchi deserve in these *Warnings* of his?

III. No less playful and festive is the criticism which Your Reverence makes in the last three sections upon the celebrated example of Philip, Chancellor of Paris, produced in volume 2 of the *History*. This example is produced on the occasion when the obligation of choosing learned and zealous Confessors is treated, and the ruin of Christianity derived in great part from less capable Confessors and Theologians. In that whole Chapter, divided into twelve sections, the most important argument concerning Confessors alone is treated. Previously, in a volume and a half, Probabilism is made to appear as what it is, a false doctrine, by every kind of argument, demonstration, and fact. Your Reverence passes all this as good, because you have not dared to attack even one of so many demonstrations. You set about criticizing an example - an argument perhaps more suitable for you - reported on the occasion when certain examples from Father Paolo Segneri concerning overly indulgent Confessors are there narrated. And from this you pretend to draw great advantage for your Probabilism. Can anything more gallant be heard? A volume and a half against Probabilism is passed over in silence. And to defend Probabilism, Your Reverence goes to consume three sections in criticizing an example produced against indulgent Confessors? If you answer that an example proved more suited to your criticism than one alone of so many Theological demonstrations, the public will reply that, if you did not feel yourself strong enough to assail the many demonstrations against Probabilism, neither, for your own decorum, ought you to have attacked an example otherwise true and celebrated among all. Let this be said solely so that the path which Your Reverence takes in defending your cause may shine ever more brightly, not in order to evade the acuteness of your criticism upon the said example. Indeed I add that this very criticism, more than anything else, manifests your great penetration. You pretend, in a few words, that the opinion favorable to plurality of Benefices was defended by none other than Philip the Chancellor and Arnould. And you report a Text of Spondanus in which it is said that the two Theologians mentioned were the only opponents in the assembly held by William, Bishop of Paris. And by this you pretend to send into the air the text of Saint Thomas which says: *On this question Theologians are found opposed to Theologians, and Jurists to Jurists*. And in order to entangle this so luminous text, do you spend three sections? Tell me a little, Your Reverence: in that Congress assembled by the Bishop of Paris, were all the Theologians and all the Jurists then living in the World and who had written upon this matter perhaps present? Because in the Congress held by the Bishop there were only two opponents, is it therefore not true, as Saint Thomas says, that *on this question Theologians are found opposed to Theologians, and Jurists to Jurists*? What does Your Reverence say? Is not your criticism upon the example produced in passing in the *History* acute and penetrating, as everyone may see, and chosen by you as a field in which to display both your erudition and your acumen? I would abuse time too much if I wished to follow all your refinements, while from the criticism of the little example in the second volume you fly away to criticize on page 137 these words: *Thus writes Caramuel alone for all*, as though Caramuel's paradoxes were ascribed to all the Probabilists. But whoever reads volume 1 of the *History*, page 272, will see that certain Casuists are there spoken of who, together with Caramuel, boast of a new Theology. And Your Reverence with your customary boldness asserts that he repeats this elsewhere *always in the manner of an undeniable supposition*. Where are these other places? Where does the Author of the *History* ever authorize now this and now that new Adam to speak for all? Is it not true that he transcribed the opinions of each Casuist in their own words? This is a fact known to Your Reverence more than to anyone else.

IV. In the tenth *Warning*, in order to smooth your way toward passing judgment upon the doctrine of Father Lessius, you place before us a long proem, and then, in the introduction to the first section, you entertain your Lord Count with hearing a Fable about a Carpenter who builds a Carriage. Finally you rewrite a halved text from the *History of Probabilism*. Now, in order to demonstrate evidently the unhappy and miserable defense which you make of Father Lessius's doctrine, I set about comparing the texts. Here, then, is what is written in the said *History*, volume 2, page 344 and following. The doctrine of Lessius and of other Jesuit Moralists was reported out of the necessity of answering Father Segneri, who gives them to us as infallible Authors, and gives the gravest Dominican Authors as Authors of lax doctrines. Let us transcribe all that stands in the *History* concerning Father Lessius.

V. *I ought now to descend to give the same sample of the other Authors given to us as infallible in Moral Theology by the pretended Father Segneri; but too much leisure would be required to turn through all their works. I shall say only in passing that each of those cited has his quite lax opinions. Does Father Leonard Lessius not teach that it is lawful to kill him who comes to take away my honor with a slap? It is lawful for an honorable man to kill an assailant who attempts to strike him with a club or a slap, in order to inflict disgrace upon him, if this disgrace cannot otherwise be avoided.* Book 2, *On Justice*, chapter 9, doubt 11, number 77. *Does he not teach that he who prevents my debtors from paying me may lawfully be killed? Does he not affirm that the thief who steals by day and does not defend himself with arms may be killed? He says that this homicide would be contrary to the law of Moses and contrary to the Civil laws, but not contrary to the Evangelical law. It is proved from Scripture, Exodus 22, where it is said that he who killed a nocturnal thief would not be guilty of blood, but he who killed a diurnal thief would be.... Hence he who killed a diurnal thief not defending himself with a weapon would not be excused from homicide in the external forum; but in the forum of conscience he would be excused if there were no probable hope of recovery, OR IF RECOVERY WERE NOT CERTAIN BUT DOUBTFUL, as Soto says, because he is not bound to lose his property OR to expose it to probable danger so that the thief may be safe.* Christian ears remain offended on hearing that the law of Moses and the laws of the Pagans condemn the homicide of a thief who does not threaten life and does not defend himself with arms, while the law of Jesus Christ, which is a law of meekness and love, afterward grants it as lawful. In the place cited, number 66. The astonishment increases when it is heard that even Clerics and Religious may kill the thieves of their possessions. *The same is lawful for Clerics in defense of their possessions.... The same right is extended to Religious.* In the place cited, number 71. The horror of this doctrine is understood all the more when the quantity of property for which the killing is granted is considered. It is not lawful, Father Lessius continues, to kill a man for one sequin or for an apple, unless, however, the loss of the property were ascribed to disgrace. For in that case every effort could be made to recover it, even by killing, when this was necessary; because in that case not so much property as honor is defended: *For a very small thing the right of defense with so great an evil to another does not appear to have been granted; for it is very unjust that, in order to save an APPLE* - this example of the apple explains the Author's mind marvelously - *or even one gold piece, anyone's life should be taken away. IF, HOWEVER, IT WOULD TURN TO YOUR DISGRACE* - here the great point of the apple is struck - *unless you wrested the thing from the thief, you could make the attempt and, if necessary, even kill him, according to Soto. For then it would be a defense not so much of the thing as of honor.* I omit running through the other matters in order to avoid prolixity.

VI. Reflect now, Lord Count, upon the most beautiful defense which His Reverence Father Lecchi makes of the doctrine of his Father Lessius. Of the killing committed in order to recover honor endangered by being stained either by a whipping or by a slap; of the homicide for a sequin or for an apple when the theft brings disgrace - and neither great disgrace nor little disgrace is said, but it is

spoken of absolutely; of the homicide granted to Clerics and Religious: nothing of all this is said. All this he approves. He seeks only to entangle the Lord Count's mind with the killing of the nocturnal thief. And first he goes to transcribe the first statement, where Father Lessius establishes an opinion taught by many, that the property must be of grave value in order that the homicide may be lawful. And with this first good opinion he pretends to justify the bad one. In this fashion one could justify even Calvin, so to speak, in order to make felt Father Lecchi's unhappy Dialectic, and say that he did not deny free will after Adam's sin because he admits it in the state of innocence. Who is that lax Casuist who, speaking absolutely, teaches that a thief may be killed for a sequin or for an apple? No one. This is a monster too horrid. It is asked whether it ceases to be horrid and scandalous even in the case in which the theft brings disgrace. All the things which Your Reverence writes on page 143 concerning the nocturnal thief are, as usual, beside the point. The diurnal thief alone is spoken of, and therefore dots were placed around the question of the nocturnal thief. I am certain, Lord Count, that when you have read what I have reported to you, you will remain ever more persuaded that your Father Lecchi has done a great wrong to his Author, because by his profound silence concerning all the bad opinions indicated there, and by the verbal dispute with which he seeks to encumber his Reader's mind with the case of the nocturnal thief, he passes over stealthily the homicide of the diurnal thief in the very case in which either the loss of the property was merely doubtful or the danger of losing the property merely probable. *But note*, His Reverence cries, *that Father Lessius in the first statement premised that this property must be of great value*. Good heavens! Because he did not affirm that, speaking absolutely, one may kill someone merely for doubt of losing a volume or a sequin, are the opinions reported therefore sound and Evangelical? For this reason were the opinions truncated. This recourse which Your Reverence makes to the truncation of opinions in order to defend his Casuists is by now known to all as evidently unjust, as a desperate refuge, as an expedient for keeping Readers at bay.

VII. No less distant from truth is the imputation which you make against the Author of the *History* on page 144 of a false supposition, when, on the occasion of refuting Father Segneri, he wrote: *Unhappy and unfortunate Christianity for fifteen and more centuries, during which it lived without Probabilism, born, as this Author himself asserts, in the preceding century.* After reporting this period, you write thus: *With what easy manner, beneath the text of the saying, he wraps a false supposition written in italics, and then goes merrily forward. This is a grace of writing entirely his own.* Precisely, Most Esteemed Father, it is entirely his own and that of all honest Writers, namely, to assert nothing without grave foundations. Read what Father Segneri writes in his second Letter, page 88, section 10: *Enough, let Your Lordship remain here. But before I advance to discourse upon the text adduced, be pleased that I notify you how the controversy so famous today, whether it is lawful in some occurrence to follow the less probable opinion in comparison or whether it is not lawful, is a controversy so young in the schools that it was born in the past century. During the fifteen preceding centuries no more thought was given to it than to the Antipodes unknown before Columbus. And with all this, men lived with good rules of Christian piety as at present. Doubts were resolved, counsels were given, confessions were heard, and all those ministries of generous charity were exercised which our century has inherited for the benefit of souls.* Can the text be more luminous, more decisive? And in the face of a text so evident, is there boldness to write that Father Concina ascribes a false fact to Father Segneri by saying that he himself confesses that Probabilism was unknown for fifteen centuries? If the Author of the *History* had written a single falsehood similar to this one of Your Reverence, you would say that the Author of the *History* is a falsifier, an impostor who seduces the public. And what is fine, you say it in fact when

that Author narrates truths of most evident facts. God forbid, however, that I should employ such formulas. I shall say only that Your Reverence innocently falls into error.

VIII. No happier is the defense of the other fact which you undertake in section 3. Father Paolo Segneri's text is this: *We see that various Authors, such as Toledo, Suárez, Sánchez, Azor, Lessius, Laymann, Valencia, and very many others, maintain that it is lawful in some occurrence to follow the less probable opinion; and yet THEY NEVER GIVE LAX DOCTRINES. Others, on the contrary, maintain that it is not lawful to follow it AND GIVE THEM.... It is not my duty to demonstrate the first of these oppositions, which is negative, but only to defend it strongly from anyone who assails it with particular cases produced by him. It is indeed my duty to demonstrate the second, which is positive, and behold me ready for the work. Giulio Mercoro.... Cajetan.... Gerson.... Trovamala, Tabiena, Domingo Soto, etc.*

IX. Your Reverence, in order always to remain like yourself, lays aside this text, and as usual goes to copy other words from the first Letter on the Probable which are less incautious, less injurious, and contain less falsehood; and with these you pretend to prove that the words reported do not conclude the intention, indeed, that they were almost not written. And in fact you write on page 148: *It remains to be seen whether this man also reports of me that I passed off Father Noël Alexandre as an Author of lax opinions.* If you had written the very words which are in Father Segneri's Letter, that man Father Concina would say the same of you that he said of the other. Of three Letters refuted in half a volume, you undertake to defend only two little texts, and do you succeed so unhappily in these two texts alone? It must be said, at least by virtue of your refutations, that the *History of Probabilism and of Rigorism* is a most solidly founded and impregnable History.

X. In section 4, page 148, you reproduce the refrain, or rather the retortion, concerning the possession of liberty made by the Reverend Father Niccolò Ghezzi in his Dialogue 2, page 42, against Probabiliorism. I had intended to refer you to read what was said against the aforementioned Father Ghezzi without repeating even a word. But then, reflecting upon the boastful entrance which you make at the beginning of the section and upon the swagger with which you maltreat your Adversary, I judged it fitting to say something of it. You liken the Probabilism refuted by Father Concina to those sketches of men which were being formed from the stones of Deucalion cast behind his shoulders, of which Porta said: *Manifest forms seemed, etc.* Truly you did well to smooth the way for your argument with a fable and a poetic fancy. For if you did not go on flattering your Lord Count from time to time with some one of the many little fables taught to your Pupils in the School of Humanities, he could not continue reading your Book. But let us hear the retortion which you make on page 148: *Do you wish, Lord Count, an evident sign that Father Concina twists the principle The condition of the possessor is better into a sense wholly contrary to that employed by the Probabilists? I shall make you touch it with your hand. He teaches that the agent may follow the opinion which appears to him more probable and favorable to liberty against the law, and, as he himself reconfirms on page 270 of volume 2, in a somewhat annoyed reply to Father Paolo Segneri, more probable not indeed at the universal Tribunal of the learned, but precisely at the little private tribunal of the agent. This greater probability which appears to the private judgment of the agent in favor of liberty does not, according to Father Concina, make him certain that that contract is not really usurious and prohibited by God. This being supposed, hear, Lord Count, how I too know how to place Father Concina in litigation with God and with Divine dominion between the petitory and possessory actions. I shall recite to you the same chain of his arguments, and shall make no other change of words than to substitute his Probabiliorism for the Probabilism attacked by him. In order to say the final words to Father Concina, I direct the discourse thus: The dominion of the human will over its*

actions is not unlimited, independent, and supreme. Is this not true? In such a way that man has no other power over his actions except that imparted to him by God. Therefore, when there is doubt about some action, there is not in the human will the moral faculty to act lawfully. What thing, then, is more foolish, more monstrous to imagine than to adhere with Father Concina that in doubtful cases man may boast a title of possession against the law because he is supported by the greater probability which appears in the little tribunal of the agent's private judgment, by virtue of which he must win the suit against God Himself?

XI. I interrupt the recital of the text, because the pen cannot bear to copy so many acute arguments. You, Most Esteemed Father Lecchi, if your Adversary represented your texts to the public as yours and you discovered a single material word changed, would cry out against the impostor and the falsifier. But I, with complete composure, shall enlighten the public concerning your sincerity of proceeding. And first, you assert that Father Concina invents a Probabilism at his pleasure, like those sketches of men formed from the stones of Deucalion. But if it is so, the duty of a truthful and honest man was to represent the native and beautiful countenance of your Probabilism and then to retort the Adversary's argument.

XII. Lord Count, if you wish to touch with your hand how many palpable falsehoods your Director passes off to you, know that Father Concina, in his *History*, volume 2, dissertation 3, chapter 1, before assailing the Probabilistic principle *The condition of the possessor is better*, faithfully transcribes the very words by which the Probabilists Segneri and Terillo explain it. I shall transcribe a few of them, begging the public to read that whole chapter cited. *Since*, writes Father Segneri, *in an equal cause the right is always presumed equally to be in doubt on both sides, in liberty and in law, it is not proper, therefore, that the one should prevail over the other which, besides the doubt common to both, has in its favor a special certain right. But he has such a right who has the right of possession, favored by the Jurists with the title: Blessed are the possessors*. Thus writes Father Paolo Segneri, whose long texts may be read in chapter 1 of the cited dissertation 3. This is not a Deucalion who forms sketches of men; it is your Father Segneri. Hear your Father Terillo, *On Conscience*, question 23, number 48, page 426: *I answer finally that the Rule favors God against us just as much as it favors us against God. It favors us so long as we are in possession of liberty. It favors God when the law is in possession. Hence, if the law certainly exists and it is doubtful whether I have paid what was owed, I am bound in that doubt to pay just as if I certainly had not paid what was owed. Therefore, as this Rule favors God when possession stands for the law, so it favors us when possession stands for liberty and there is doubt concerning the law.* These are two Princes of the Probabilists proposed by the Jesuit Father Monti to Father Concina as Masters from whom to learn Probabilism. These and other longer texts are reported in the *History* at the place cited. If Your Reverence found yourself in one hundredth degree of such advantage over your Adversary, you would immediately declaim with these gentle and courteous phrases of yours: Father Concina, with brazen brow and hardened countenance, writes that Probabilism has not been represented to the life when it has been described in the very words of their Authors. Thus, Most Esteemed Father, your error thus far is as evident as the noonday light.

XIII. Let us pass now to the retortion, as rancid as Probabilism, a thousand times declared inept and unbecoming to a sensible man. But so it is: the Probabilists have nothing else to oppose, and therefore are constrained always to cause the same phantoms to appear. From the two texts produced as capital principles among the Probabilists, you, Lord Count, see that when the right is equally doubtful between the Divine law and human liberty, in that case possession is verified in favor of liberty against the law, because *the condition of the possessor is better*. Thus teach the Probabilists; and I

challenge the Reverend Father Lecchi, with all the Probabilists, to criticize this proposition. Diametrically opposed, all the Antiprobabilists teach that in this case *the safer side must be chosen*, because all men being born subjects of the Divine law, the law, not liberty, possesses in case of doubt. The Probabilists suppose the possession of liberty in the suit with the Divine law; and from this possession they infer a right and Probable reason for exemption from the law. The Antiprobabilists detest this principle and establish the contrary. The more verisimilar, stronger, more probable reasons which can be had in this world convince one that the law does not bind in this dispute; therefore liberty is not subject. This is the argument of the Antiprobabilists. The Probabilists infer the right from an ill-supposed possession. The Antiprobabilists infer possession from the more powerful reasons of right. These principles are as opposed as darkness and light. And does Your Reverence dare to make retortions, and flatter yourself that you make the public believe that you can retort the arguments of the Antiprobabilists against them? You, Most Esteemed Father Lecchi, are so innocent in this matter that you are ignorant that for a century these wretched retortions have been made most unhappily by the Probabilists. You will reply that I assert this. But I answer that the evidently contrary principles of the one side and the other indicated by me clearly demonstrate it.

XIV. But you repeat the customary stanza. *The more probable opinion at the little Tribunal of the agent may be false. What thing, then, is more monstrous than to assert with Father Concina that in doubtful cases man may boast a title of possession against the law? Let us strengthen the argument. When the agent has in his favor the greater probability of his private judgment against the law, he is certain neither of the concession nor of the prohibition. Therefore the right remains doubtful; and he who acts by virtue of a doubtful dominion sins. Behold now, O Probabiliorists. Behold, O Father Concina, at your Tribunal God with a certain and supreme right, and the will with a doubtful, uncertain, dependent right, however more probable it appears to it. In favor of whom will you pronounce sentence, O Father Concina?* Against your inexperience, O Father Lecchi, for you show yourself wholly fasting from this cause. Father Ghezzi proposed this retortion at least with some phantom of an appearance. The other Probabilists, Casnedi, Segneri, La Croix, Illsung, and others, painted it with some cosmetic and thickened it with at least some equivocal sophism. But Your Reverence retorts it in a manner - permit me to say - too coarse and less becoming to your spirit. The first principle of the Antiprobabilists is that in doubtful and uncertain cases the law possesses. The more probable opinion at the little Tribunal of the agent does not found certainty. That little tribunal of the agent is a trifle invented by your Father Segneri against his own General. Father Concina mentions it in the *History* in order to deride it as too foreign to the point. In order that the more probable opinion contrary to the law may be the rule of conscience, not just any greater Probability suffices; it is required in such a degree that it renders the safer opinion favorable to the law a mere scruple. It must so appear at the Tribunal of the agent, because the agent is not a log which must act by another's judgment; he is a Christian who must judge that his opinion is the more conformable to the Scriptures, to the Fathers, to the Councils, and to the Theologians; he must judge that the very Theologians dispassionately judged by him to be the more learned and upright judge as he does. This has been explained at greater length both in the *History* and in the *Examination* against Father Ghezzi. Tell me a little, Your Reverence: may the Judge judge according to the less probable opinion? Nor is it valid to assign a disparity between the Judge and the agent who is not a judge, because all such disparities are dispelled in the *History*. When the more probable, less safe opinion has the prerogatives described in the places cited, it founds all that moral certainty of truth which can be had in this world. God does not oblige us to follow the safer, but the true, or that which, after diligent

examination, we judge nearer to the true. The more probable opinion in the aforesaid manner is that which, in relation to us, contains the true or is nearer to the true. Therefore it is a just rule of a right judgment. Therefore it is true that the law in a similar case does not bind.

XV. Behold, Most Esteemed Father Lecchi, the answer which you request from Father Concina on page 149: *I beg Father Concina*, you say, *to answer his own argument, because I am certain that he will not be able to do so otherwise than by retracting little by little the understanding supposed by him in the Probabilists concerning the use and meaning of that principle: the condition of the possessor is better.* Most Reverend Father, that you can write this knowing that Father Concina reported the very words of Segneri and Terillo by which they explain this principle; knowing that this miserable retortion of yours is solved a hundred times in the same *History*; that you, I say, can write thus in the face of arguments and facts manifest even to those uneducated persons who know how to read, can derive from nothing else than the Probabilistic fog capable of obscuring the most sublime intellects. I pass over various other things in this *Warning* of yours because they are similar to those refuted.

Chapter X — Upon the Eleventh Warning: Concerning the Distinction Between Practical and Speculative Probability

CHAPTER X
REFLECTIONS
UPON THE ELEVENTH WARNING
CONCERNING THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN PRACTICAL AND SPECULATIVE PROBABILITY. OF WHAT WEIGHT IS THE AUTHORITY OF FATHER DANIEL, DRAWN FROM HIS ENTERTAINMENTS CONDEMNED BY THE HOLY SEE. AN UNJUST CENSURE AGAINST CARDINAL NORIS. ENCOMIA JUSTLY BESTOWED UPON THIS GREAT CARDINAL BY THE REIGNING PONTIFF BENEDICT XIV

I. You begin, Most Esteemed Father, your eleventh *Warning* with this ingenious and significant period: *Not because you understand little; you do not understand me, Lord Count, because you understand too much.* Probabilism always has certain graceful antitheses ready. Because the Lord Count penetrates too deeply, he understands nothing. To tell the truth, your Lord Count can understand little if matters are depicted to him confusedly. You, Most Esteemed Father Lecchi, labor through four long sections to demonstrate that there exists a distinction between practical and speculative probability. You accumulate reasons and heap together examples in order to demonstrate your proposition, founded as usual upon a false supposition: that the Author of the *History* denied such a distinction. Reread the very title of section 5 , dissertation 1, chapter 2, volume 1, page 348, where you will find that he refutes the abuse which the Probabilists make of this distinction. There he explains with clarity and precision the notions of the two probabilities, speculative and practical. And Your Reverence, as though he absolutely rejected such a distinction, writes against him in section 4, page 167: *But tell me, if you please, Father Concina. Does he perhaps pretend that the dictionaries be reformed and that that unappealable arbiter of the meaning of words which is called usage be removed?....* And on page 168: *Suárez, Vázquez, Sánchez, Lessius, Lugo, and Laymann, in the age in which they wrote, found these terms already introduced, as well as many others, by that authoritative School whose primacy and jurisdiction to give words their stamp and to prescribe their current value is disputed by no one in the Kingdom of Scholastic Theology. They could do no otherwise than accept them in good faith and clothe their speculations in the uniform of Thomistic words. Nor does the reply avail that it would have been better counsel to call speculative cognition that which embraces, not one, but all the circumstances of practical execution. Go and tell it to those learned old men who speak otherwise.*

II. If what Your Reverence writes concerning the acceptance of words according to the stamp and the value of the meaning given by the Thomistic School were true, perhaps there would not be so many literary wars between the Molinists and the Thomists. Where they believe advantage will return to them, the Molinists represent themselves as disciples of the Thomists. But on other occasions they desire the Molinists, and not the Thomists, as Masters and inventors of fine things. Let us come to the *learned old men*. Can the true understanding of the distinction between speculative and practical probability, then, not be made intelligible to them? What instability!

III. But Father Escobar, who reduced to a compendium the Theology of the *learned old men*, writes that he cannot perceive that an opinion should be probable in theory and yet cannot be embraced in practice. Here are his words: *For I cannot at all perceive that some opinion is speculatively probable and yet*

cannot be embraced in practice, since practical probability arises from speculative probability and differs from it only as an effect from its cause. For whether anyone performs a deed justly or unjustly arises from his speculative judgment that it may lawfully be done, since speculative cognition directs the will toward the deed. Giovanni Sánchez, Caramuel, Cárdenas, and others teach the same doctrine, as has been proved in the *History of Probabilism*. Why did Your Reverence make no mention of this text of Escobar? Will you perhaps reject the opinion of this celebrated Interpreter of the twenty-four *learned old men*? You, Most Reverend Father Lecchi, have recourse to the authority of Monsignor della Casa, writing thus on page 168: *In words, as in garments, judicious Writers in every age have wished to observe the law of good breeding taught by Monsignor della Casa.* And you transfer the text of this Author in fine italics. For my part, I would believe that in Christian Morals the authority of Father Escobar ought to prevail over the authority of Monsignor della Casa. Indeed, it seems to me that the comparison itself is injurious. Except that this is not the first time Your Reverence has brought grave prejudice upon your cause by wishing to interweave certain pieces of erudition too peregrine and too inferior to the gravity of the cause which you treat. But the little treatise on good breeding had been explained to the youths in School; and since the little piece of erudition remained in the mind, it was necessary to peddle it, although it was beside the point. On page 169 Your Reverence brings forward the authority of Father Daniel as Judge of supreme and final Appeal: *Father Daniel was the mediator who in a few words ended this dispute. Here is what he writes in his Entertainments between Cleander and Eudoxus.* If someone had written in this fashion against Your Reverence: *Mr. Pascal was the mediator who in a few words ended this dispute with quasi-declamations*, would you not have deafened Heaven? How? A rotten Jansenist, a Book condemned by the Holy See, is produced to me as Judge and mediator of the Cause? But are the *Entertainments between Cleander and Eudoxus* not condemned by the Congregation of the Holy Office, by which the *Provincial Letters* are likewise condemned? Are the Books of your Authors perhaps canonized when they are proscribed? At every turn you adduce those *Dialogues* as the most powerful work your Associate Father Ghezzi writes against Pascal. And that most excellent Work is condemned, as the *Provincial Letters* are condemned. You will say that Father Daniel's doctrine concerning practical and speculative Probability is not condemned. I grant it; but neither is Pascal's doctrine concerning that Probability condemned. Nevertheless, woe to him who should cite him as Judge.

IV. On page 171 Your Reverence transcribes a doctrine of the Most Eminent Cardinal Noris and immediately writes thus: *This indeed is an idea to be promulgated in Plato's Republic.* This is not the place to demonstrate further how beside the point the doctrine concerning homicide committed in necessary defense is opposed, this matter being most difficult both in the speculative and in the practical. I reflect only upon the courteous phrase with which so great a Cardinal is spoken of. Is the doctrine of Cardinal Noris, who teaches that in defense of one's own life one must not allow oneself to be led by passion, but must be regulated by reason together with other most difficult circumstances, a doctrine to be preached in Plato's Republic? But is the doctrine of so many of your Probabilists, who teach that in the said defense one may surprise and kill the man prepared and resolved to take one's life before he puts his hand to his sword, a doctrine to be preached in human Society, is that not so? Cardinal Noris has validly refuted Molinism; he has repressed the audacity of those who despised the doctrine of Saint Augustine and blunted the bold censures against the Holy Father. What is required here for a just defense and an innocent guardianship? What is required? Let this great Cardinal be placed in the Catalogue of the Jansenists, as Father Dominique de Colonia has in fact placed him in his *Jansenist*

Library, page 25, number 32, reprinted for the third time in Brussels. At the very time when I am writing such things, there comes into my hands so luminous an encomium made of this most celebrated Cardinal that it dispels all the gloomy clouds within which the spirit of faction has attempted to wrap him. Before transcribing the great and most just encomium, I must premise a short narrative. The Most Reverend Father Master Gioja, an Augustinian, during the course of about twelve years in the capacity of Assistant of Italy under two of his Generals, made known, within and outside his Order, his rare talents and how much a single man can accomplish when furnished with courage, zeal, prudence, dexterity, and superiority to hope and fear, to interest and threats. Appointed Apostolic Visitor of his Order, he knew how to correct, punish, and reward; to abolish abuses, establish reforms, overcome opposition, and conciliate for himself the favor and patronage of Princes for the Restoration of Regular Discipline and for the advancement of the studies of sound doctrine. Finally, still more concerned for the honor of his Order, he resolved to implore from the Holiness of BENEDICT POPE XIV, happily Reigning, the privilege of rendering perpetual the office of General of his Order. He obtained it in fact, with the condition that this privilege be accepted in the elective General Chapter at Bologna by two thirds of the Voting Fathers, who were about 139. When the Pontifical Brief was put to the ballot, it was accepted by 136 votes. And the aforementioned Father Gioja, after all the things indicated, was elected Perpetual General of his Order in that same Chapter by 138 votes, although of fresh age and robust constitution. I have narrated this not so much to render justice to the wisdom, spirit, and zeal of the Most Reverend Father Prior General Gioja, as for the instruction and confusion of certain miserable and foolish Politicians, unhappy idolaters of fortune, who, for fear of losing votes, of overturning their own designs, of not obtaining rank or office, close their eyes so as not to see, allow abuses and corrupt practices to triumph, and preach that one must have *zeal according to prudence*. Their prudence consists in doing nothing, in a scandalous connivance, and in a shameful dissimulation of the most pernicious laxities. Let us return.

V. In the aforementioned Pontifical Diploma, the Holy Pope, among the other grave motives which he adduces for favoring so illustrious an Order, expresses two with greater distinction. The constant defense of the unshaken, irrefragable doctrine of the Holy Patriarch Augustine. The multitude of holy and learned Men whom this Order has nurtured, among whom, as the Sun among so many Stars, shines the Most Eminent Cardinal Noris, celebrated by the whole Republic of Letters as the splendor and ornament not only of his Order but of the Roman Church herself. Let us transcribe the words of the well-conceived and most just encomium: *For at all times We have held this illustrious Family in the highest esteem, both because the safest and unshaken dogmas of the same Saint Augustine have been handed down and preserved by its sons, and because of the eminent men whom it has produced, outstanding in piety and learning. And as the equal of them all is Henry, of good memory, who while he lived was called Cardinal Noris, Priest of the aforesaid Holy Roman Church, whose friendship We enjoyed when We were formerly established in the lesser ranks. Although he is celebrated in the languages of all Nations, nevertheless by Us he must never be named without splendid praise as THE MOST BRILLIANT LIGHT of the aforesaid Roman Church.* Go now, Father de Colonia, and press into the Calendar of the Jansenists a Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, celebrated with so solemn and luminous an encomium by a Pope so wise in his Brief *Inter maximas, Nostra, etc.*, given this year 1745 on the thirty-first day of March. Let His Reverence Father Lecchi learn from this to be more cautious in the future and not to touch certain keys, lest he be forced to hear music little pleasing and truths little palatable.

Chapter XI — Upon the Twelfth Warning: Singular Comments upon Two Texts of Veyra and Saint Augustine

CHAPTER XI
REFLECTIONS
UPON THE TWELFTH WARNING
SINGULAR COMMENTS UPON TWO TEXTS OF VEYRA AND SAINT AUGUSTINE. THE INCREDIBLE PARADOX: THE THEOLOGIAN, AS MASTER IN THE SCHOOL, IS OBLIGED TO FOLLOW AND TEACH THE MORE PROBABLE AND SOUNDER OPINIONS; BUT AS CONSULTOR HE MAY COUNSEL THE LESS PROBABLE AND LESS VERISIMILAR DOCTRINES IN HIS STUDY AND IN THE CONFESSIONAL. WHAT CENSURE THIS FINE DOCTRINE OF FATHER LECCHI DESERVES. OTHER LITTLE DOCTRINES OF HIS SUBMITTED TO EXAMINATION

I. The authority which you oppose on page 178, that of the great Preacher Father Veyra concerning the stretching of the authorities of the Fathers and of the Scriptures, could not have been more fitting. *This great man weeps*, you write, *on seeing the poor passages of Scripture come as one who goes to martyrdom. Some come twisted, others dragged, others dislocated, others distorted, others mutilated; and only bound they do not come, because they are without connection. Can there be greater Tyranny, etc.?* If this is tyranny, I do not know whether in this kind there is found a Tyrant equal to the Reverend Father Antonio Veyra. Great is your misfortune, Most Esteemed Father Lecchi! You do nothing but compel your Adversary to tell you things little pleasing. Do you cite Father Veyra against those who stretch the authorities of the Scriptures? Whoever has read the *Mystical Rose*, the *Dreams of Saint Francis Xavier*, and the Sermons of Father Veyra will remain surprised on seeing this Preacher adduced to prove that passages of Scripture must be cited in their obvious and natural sense. For my part, I venerate both the truly sublime genius and the profound penetration of Father Veyra. For the rest, in strangely stretching the Holy Scriptures, I do not know who equals him. I am certain that I would afford pleasant entertainment to my Reader if I were here to represent to him in good order a little collection of texts interpreted in the Spanish manner by the same man. I shall mention in passing one of his thoughts upon a passage of Scripture and upon three Sacraments. *You see*, he writes in his *Mystical Rose*, part 1, sermon 19, section 1, page 62, *how the Sacrament of the Gospel is entirely similar to the Sacrament of the Altar. And the Sacrament of the Rosary? This too is so in the same manner. The Rosary which you carry in your hand - see how pure these must be - is the visible sign of this Sacrament. The invisible effect is sanctifying grace, which by means of the Rosary those obtain who worthily and devoutly recite it. And does the Rosary contain anything more? It contains, in its own manner, all that the Sacrament of the Altar contains, and all that the womb of the Virgin contains, and SOMETHING MORE STILL: because it contains not only Christ as incarnate, like the Virginal Womb; nor only Christ as dead, like the Sacrament of the Altar; but Christ as incarnate, as dead , and as risen, in all three of the Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries of the same Christ.* But hear a more natural interpretation of Holy Scripture in the same Sermon, page 72, section 6, number 141: *When King Pharaoh in Egypt had in a dream those two famous visions, the one of the Cows first fat and immediately lean, the other of the Ears first full and grained, afterward dry, Joseph was called to interpret those prophetic dreams; and he answered that the King's dream was a single dream and a single vision. But if the dreams had been two, and the things or figures which the King saw so diverse, how does Joseph say that his dream was one?*

Because, although they were two in their accidents, they were one in their substance. Although they were two in that which was seen, they were one in that which they signified. In the same way in the Sacrament and also in the Rosary. In the Sacrament, that which is seen in the Host and in the Chalice are different accidents and signs; but that which these signs cover and signify are the same Body and Blood of Christ in the Host and the same Blood and Body of Christ in the Chalice; and for this reason they are not two, but one and the same Sacrament. In the Rosary, that which we see in one prayer is the Our Father; that which we hear in the other is the Hail Mary. Considering them for what they are, they are two different prayers; understanding them by what they signify, they are one and the same. And as in the Host, by force of the words, there subsists the Body, and in the Chalice, by force of the words, the Blood; but the Blood has the Body by concomitance, and the Body the Blood by concomitance; in the first prayer of the Rosary, by force of the words, there subsists the Our Father, and in the second, by force of the words, the Hail Mary. And the Our Father has also by concomitance the Hail Mary, and the Hail Mary the Our Father.

II. Let us now pass to examine the stretching of a text which you charge against the Author of the *History*. The text is taken from Saint Augustine, book 2 *Against Julian*, chapter 3, and is reported in the said *History*, volume 1, page 12. You argue acutely that Saint Augustine disputes against Julian upon the controversy of Grace, not upon the question of Probabilism. Therefore to adduce against the Probabilists a text of Saint Augustine taken from the second book *Against Julian* is a monstrous stretching. Excellently, as usual. In the place cited, Saint Augustine adduces against Julian the authority of Saint Cyprian taken from the Book *On Almsgiving*. Therefore Saint Augustine twists the authority of the Fathers, since he violently turns the maxims which Saint Cyprian inculcates concerning the morality of almsgiving to authorize the dogma of grace. Can stranger things be heard? If the Pelagians objected that the necessity of invisible grace does not encourage men to the exercise of virtue, do the Probabilists not likewise object that the necessity of drawing as near to the truth as is morally possible drives Christians to despair? And will the use of a maxim for the instruction of the latter, employed by Saint Augustine against the former, be a violent stretching? And what is of greater consequence is that, on the same page where he cites the text of Saint Augustine, the Author of the *History* likewise adduces the authority of Louis Bail, of Francis, Archbishop of Rouen, and of Noël Alexandre, in order to fix the Epoch of laxity in morals in the same century in which laxity in the matter of grace began to be introduced by the Pelagians. But what finally renders the criticism of His Reverence Father Lecchi marvelous is that the Author of the *History* does not adduce the authorities objected from Saint Augustine in order to prove or disprove any point of doctrine, as Your Reverence represents to his Readers contrary to all truth. In that entire second section of the introduction to the *History*, page 11 and following, the origin of censuring the defenders of Evangelical Morality as Rigorists and Jansenists is treated. And for this purpose the texts of Saint Augustine are adduced, by which the analogy is indicated between the supporters of lax doctrine in the matter of free will and the supporters of free will with respect to the choice of opinions more pleasing and more conformable to inclination in the Probabilistic system. Now whoever reads the texts adduced will discern how appropriate they are, how fitting, for making known to certain Probabilists their injustice in passing off the teachers of sound Morality as Rigorists. This single reflection suffices for everyone to recognize how felicitous is the criticism of Your Reverence.

III. The comments with which you, Most Esteemed Father Lecchi, expound the Decrees formed by the Regular Orders to follow the more probable opinion give the final completion to your criticism. Nothing less than your acuteness was required to obscure ordinances so clear and manifest. It is evident, however, that you did not dare by yourself to undertake the enterprise of calling such laws

into doubt. You called to your aid your Confrere, the Reverend Father Bovio, who with interpretations even more entangled than yours endeavors to circumvent those same laws, as will be seen in the brief specimen which we shall give of his work. In order to advance that which pleases you most, you do not report the words of the decrees formed by the Orders. You transcribe only one text of Father Vitelleschi, General of the Society, leaving to Father Bovio, as a Theologian more acute and more capable than you, the task of interpreting the laws of your illustrious Society.

IV. But let us approach the great Paradox. Because of an attachment too affectionate toward your Probabilism, Your Reverence advances a doctrine incredibly strange and unheard of. On reading it the first time I feared that I saw amiss; but, read and reread, I always find it such. You advise your Lord Count and all Christianity that the Theologian, as TEACHER in the school, must teach the sounder and truer opinions; but that this Theologian, as CONSULTOR, may in the Confessional and elsewhere teach the less sound and less verisimilar doctrines. And because Father Concina was ignorant of this singular doctrine, you insult him as a man who walks amid frequent blunders. These are your words on page 184: *And here again observe, Lord Count, one of Father Concina's frequent blunders in confounding things most diverse from one another. It is one thing that a Doctor who by office teaches is obliged to choose, between two contrary opinions, that which in the direct Examination of his private judgment has the appearance of being more Probable. It is another thing that the greater verisimilitude of his private judgment, however much opposed by another greater verisimilitude of other Doctors, becomes an unavoidable law for himself and for his Pupils and the sole rule of what is lawful. This second is openly denied. The first is affirmed by the more celebrated Probabilists, which was likewise noted by us in the seventh Warning. It suffices for now to remind you of the doctrine of Suárez already cited there, on I-II, On the Proximate Rule of Goodness and Malice, disputation 12, section 6, who, after having established that it is lawful for one giving counsel to follow an opinion even when setting aside that which he judges more probable, adds with respect to Teachers: It is otherwise, however, in teaching; for the Teacher is bound to teach the sounder and TRUER doctrine, in which he may sin by degrees according to the quality of the matter. From this difference IN COUNSELING AND IN TEACHING, noted by many others, ESPECIALLY BY THE FOLLOWERS OF SUÁREZ, you can clearly distinguish, Lord Count, when those Decrees promulgated in the Religious Orders regard PRECISELY THE obligation of Teachers, AND NOT THAT OF CONSULTORS, whose office in replying to QUESTIONS IS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THE FORMER*.

V. Reverend Father Lecchi, this time you have gained a complete victory over your Adversary. Father Concina candidly confesses that he fell into the blunder of confounding those two things, Teacher and Consultor. He never believed that a Theologian as Teacher must teach sound doctrine, and that as Consultor he may counsel corrupt doctrine; that as Teacher he must confess the truth, and as Consultor he may tell a lie. Are we not here amid the customary paralogisms and customary fiery and injurious declamations? No, Most Reverend Father. These are neither paralogisms nor injurious declamations; they are necessary and evident consequences deduced from your principles. To the proofs. And before entering into the cause, I premise that I do not wish for now to set about examining in its sources the doctrine of the Most Eminent Doctor Suárez. The great General Tirso González, Camargo, Elizalde, and so many other Most Learned Jesuits have demonstrated that Father Suárez is opposed to Probabilism. For now I set this aside, and I wish with submission and docility to receive your doctrine exactly as you produce it. And in the first place I observe that, your doctrine being admitted, all the Probabilists who teach in the Schools the less probable doctrine, less near to the true and less sound, are guilty of grave fault to a greater or lesser degree according to the greater

or lesser importance of the doctrine taught. For according to your reported Rule, these men are by office under obligation to teach, between two contrary opinions, that which in the direct Examination has the appearance of being more Probable. All the Probabilists teach in the Schools that opinion which in the direct Examination has the appearance of being less Probable. Therefore they all sin. The first proposition is your doctrine taught, according to you, by the Most Eminent Doctor: *For the Teacher is bound to teach the sounder and truer doctrine, in which he may sin by degrees according to the quality of the matter.* The second is an evident fact which resounds in the Schools and is printed in all the Books of the Probabilists. The consequence is legitimate. Let us now feel the pulse of that doctrine, *the sounder and truer* doctrine of the Teacher and the *less Probable* doctrine of the Father Consultor. Between two moral opinions contrary to one another concerning the lawfulness of the same action, you, Most Esteemed Father Lecchi, as Father Professor in your Chair are obliged by office to teach that your Lord Count, by way of example, is obliged to pay his grave debts, even at the cost of reducing the train, the retinue, the luxury, and the pomp of the Lady Countess. You as Theologian and Preceptor must advise him that those contrived pretenses of maintaining his station avail nothing, nor does that most grave difficulty of his in paying. In your Chair and in your direct judgment you are persuaded and convinced that this is the sounder and truer doctrine and that it has the appearance of being more Probable. If, then, from the Chair of the School you pass to the Chair of the Church, or to the House of the Lord Count to perform the office of Consultor, then you may counsel the contrary opinion and release the Lord Count from the payment of his debts. Of these two opinions contrary to one another, if one is true, the other is false. Just as it is impossible that the creditor should have and not have his money at the same time, that the Lord Count should pay and not pay his debt, so it is impossible that, if your opinion which you teach as Theologian is true, the contrary which you pronounce as Consultor should not be false. Therefore it is evident that if as Theologian you speak the truth, as Consultor you teach falsehood. These are truths so splendid and so natural that you may indeed have recourse to the customary distinctions of the material and the formal, of the direct and the reflex, and to similar subterfuges; but with all these squads of distinctions you will never persuade unprejudiced minds of the compatibility of these two contrary doctrines of Teacher and Consultor. It is true that you immediately add some words of the Most Eminent Doctor: *Provided that the one who counsels retain truth in his responses.* But if as Theologian he has communicated that truth, he cannot retain it as Consultor. This truth is one: if it is found in your opinion as Theologian, certainly it cannot exist in your contrary opinion as Consultor. If as Theologian you speak the truth, as Consultor you must tell a lie. You will perhaps answer with your Reverend Father Niccolò Ghezzi that to the good Probabilist truth matters little or nothing. Authentic probability is enough for him. Now this good probability may be found in both contra ry opinions. Not even these specious mantles suffice to cover the horror which, according to my weak judgment, the doctrine described engenders. Apparent probability may be found in both opinions, but never two contrary probabilities which approach the truth; rather, as much as one approaches the truth, so much does the other approach falsehood. Therefore if the Probability of the Theologian is near the truth, the probability of the Consultor draws near to falsehood. Therefore, Most Illustrious Lord Count, if your Reverend Father Lecchi as Theologian sets you upon the road toward Paradise, as Consultor he directs you toward Hell. Here there is no middle, no escape, no subterfuge. Does Your Reverence now understand into what narrow straits your Probabilism drives you? And you, Lord Count, if you truly desire to save your soul, put on again the uniform of a pupil in order to hear your

Father as Preceptor in the School: *For the Teacher is bound to teach the sounder and truer doctrine.* And never hear him as Consultor outside the School; for he advises you clearly that then, when the need requires it, he will suggest to you the less true and less Probable doctrine. Never consent to receive that monstrous maxim of diversity in the same man as consulting Theologian and as teaching Theologian. Let us rewrite it once again, because it surprises me so much that I fear my eyes deceive me: *From this difference IN COUNSELING AND IN TEACHING, noted by many others and especially by the followers of Suárez, you can clearly distinguish, Lord Count, when these Decrees promulgated in the Religious Orders regard PRECISELY the obligation of Teachers, AND NOT THAT OF CONSULTORS, whose office in replying to QUESTIONS IS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THE FORMER*. Now I understand your judgment in going into the Cantons of the Swiss to print similar doctrines, because in Italy they would not have been admitted unless you had caused them to be printed clandestinely. This fine doctrine of yours is copied neither from Medina, nor from Báñez, nor from Gallego, nor from Zanardi, nor from La Cruz, but it is noted especially by the followers of Suárez. I, Most Esteemed Father Lecchi, am persuaded that the wise followers of Suárez will detest a similar doctrine. At most, perhaps some partisan of Father Tamburini will repeat the rule of the same Tamburini, who teaches: *Let this be noted especially for the Confessors of MERCHANTS AND PRINCES*. See the *History of Probabilism*, etc., volume 1, page 112 and following.

VI. After the examination of a little doctrine so savory, concerning the contrariety between the Father Theologian and the Father Consultor, I would believe that I was offering things too insipid to my Reader if I were to spread before his eyes the defenses which you make of certain Casuists on page 185 and following. You produce the authority of the *Simia of Montalto* to prove that the learned Juniors drew their Theology from the Scriptures and from the Fathers. The authority of that *Simia* is not received by the Erudite who are versed in the doctrine of the Fathers. But His Reverence, in order to overthrow and defeat his Adversary beyond repair, has recourse to your celebrated Father Carrattino, a confrere of the Author of the *History*. Let us as usual transcribe his words from page 190, where he writes thus: *Lord Count, I do not believe that it is fitting for me to reply to so unusual a manner of writing. His very confreres have already answered for all, and they answered in terms which I have always thought it my duty to spare him. Bah! The shameless attempt of enormous obstinacy! Has partisan zeal brought Daniele Concina to this point, that he should have striven and attempted to cloud and overwhelm with darkness a most manifest truth by a most patent lie?* Your Reverence judged it an honest and Christian thing not to revile the Author of the *History* with the terms obstinate and liar. Yet you wished to execute this vituperative reproach with the courteous Latin words of the Confrere Father Carrattino. But if this Reverend Father Master Carrattino had unjustly calumniated Father Concina; but if this Father Carrattino had attacked a sound, true, incontrovertible doctrine according to all the Fathers and Theologians and even the benign Probabilists themselves? But if this Father Carrattino had printed a false doctrine, false and reproved by Probabilism itself? If these hypotheses were true, how could Your Reverence ever justify yourself? And yet these hypotheses are most true, and of this you, Most Esteemed Father Lecchi, will in due time be fully enlightened. The Author of the *History* suffers, Reverend Father Lecchi, suffers with religious and constant patience the too unjust injuries and the abuses too alien to the Christian spirit, not to say the Religious spirit, knowing well that if God permits, through His tremendous judgments, that truth and innocence be oppressed for some interval, nevertheless at the opportune time appointed by Providence He causes it to shine forth luminously, to the confusion of all those who oppose it.

VII. Your Reverence advances another doctrine no less surprising on pages 193 and 194, where you write thus: *Lord Count, in order to cheer you a little, hear how Father Concina on page 332 of volume 1 reproaches Father Segneri for such a fear of not being able in many matters to discover the truth, a reproach which could be made equally to Saint Augustine. Do you, then, despair of discovering the truth? But that God who said: Seek, and you shall find. That God who has ready: If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all abundantly, etc. Does the example of holy David avail nothing to animate you, who with confidence speaks to God: Teach me Thy justifications? Does that God who gives wisdom to little ones bring you no comfort? Does nothing hearten you, etc.? Poor man*, exclaims His Reverence, *how he toils uselessly! Does not so great a profusion of texts upon the search for truth make you laugh, in relation to those grave controversies, debated on one side and the other by great Doctors, of which Father Segneri speaks?*

VIII. *Poor man*: certainly Father Concina confesses it, and because he recognizes himself as poor, he sees the necessity of having recourse to God in order to implore from Him the helps and lights necessary to acquire knowledge of the truth. *Does not so great a profusion of texts in the search for truth make you laugh?* you, Father Lecchi, exclaim. No, Most Esteemed Father, it does not make every Christian laugh, but weep, and weep bitterly, at this derision of yours concerning a Capital point of Christianity. What? No longer the Pelagians, but a Catholic, pious, and learned Theologian laughs and makes sport of the doctrine which, with the Holy Scriptures in hand, inculcates the necessity of having recourse to God through prayer in order to implore the light necessary to discover the truth? Is this a doctrine to make one laugh? All the Saints teach that the graver the controversies debated, the greater is the necessity of prayer. Holy Church, in the lessons of Saint Thomas Aquinas, teaches that this Angelic Doctor, in difficult passages of Holy Scripture, joined fasting to prayer: *He never gave himself to reading or writing except after prayer. In difficulties concerning passages of Holy Scripture he employed fasting together with prayer.* And Your Reverence precisely derides prayer in the search for truth amid grave controversies placed in dispute? *Does not so great a profusion of texts upon the SEARCH for truth make you laugh, in relation to those grave controversies debated on one side and the other by great Doctors?* No, Most Reverend Father, the doctrine which Father Concina teaches from the Holy Scriptures does not make one laugh; but your error, by which you deride Catholic doctrine, provokes tears and indignation. And so that you may not be able to say as usual either that I distort or that I truncate your doctrine, let us examine it a little more distinctly. That in all the Controversies concerning Evangelical Morality the truth is not discovered by everyone is a fact too evident. But it is one thing that everyone does not discover that truth which he seeks; it is another to assert that all are not obliged to seek the truths pertaining to their proper state . Worse still is to deride the holy doctrine by which it is taught that, in order to attain the truth, recourse to the Father of heavenly lights is necessary. You, Reverend Father Lecchi, deride Father Concina as a *poor man*. Why? Because he labors to produce many holy texts which promise the discovery of necessary truths to those who implore it with sincerity of heart and with the conditions prescribed in the Gospel. To the point. Either you deride the aforementioned holy texts: *Seek, and you shall find. Everyone who asks receives. Knock, and it shall be opened, etc.*, because they are produced by Father Concina to demonstrate the obligation of having recourse to God in order to attain knowledge of necessary truths; or because they are produced to demonstrate that he who with sincerity of contrite heart has recourse to God in order to implore His grace so as to know the truth will in fact attain knowledge of the truths necessary to salvation. These are the only two senses in which you can deride the aforementioned texts. If you deride them in the first sense, you declare yourself a defender of the Pelagian Heresy. If you deride them in the second sense, you likewise

plunge into a similar most grave error. What? You object: *Did Saint Thomas and Saint Bonaventure, so often discordant in their doubts pertaining to morals, perhaps not have recourse to God? And had Saint Augustine perhaps forgotten the Divine promises in the question already mentioned?* Excellently. Saints Thomas, Bonaventure, and Augustine were not always heard in their prayers by which they implored the discovery of truths. Therefore it is an illusion of that poor man Father Concina to adduce the holy texts in order to animate all to implore from God knowledge of the truth. This is a necessary consequence of your reply, and this is an intolerable error and scandal. What? The prayers of Saints Thomas, Bonaventure, and Augustine were not always heard. Therefore persuading all to pray is a fanaticism of that poor man Father Concina. Invent, Most Esteemed Father Lecchi, as many little distinctions as you wish; you will never reconcile these doctrines of yours with those errors. But where do I leave another error of fact? You write that Saint Bonaventure and Saint Thomas were *so often discordant in controversies pertaining to morals*. This frequent discord in matters of morals is an invention of yours; whereas, on the contrary, such discord is rare in these Saints. And what is of great importance is that, when the Holy Fathers dissent among themselves in Moral controversies, they never promise security to their Readers, but on the contrary disclose the danger, so that everyone either abstains from acting or embraces the safer side when grave necessity does not persuade the contrary. The Probabilists, however, at the very time when they teach and promote the less probable opinions, pass them off to the people and to all as safe Canons, as certain and infallible Rules of a right or inculpable conscience. Saint Augustine, whom you adduce concerning the controversies of Matrimony, warns that the question of second marriages is most difficult in the case of having repudiated the first Wife on account of Marriage. He confesses that he is not in the clear light of this difficulty. You Probabilists oppose this disagreement of the holy Doctors, otherwise rare in moral controversies, as an argument by which to support all the most culpable ignorances. But this objection serves absolutely nothing to cover the grave error by which you deride the holy texts produced to prove not only the obligation of having recourse to God in order to implore the light necessary to discover the truths pertaining to our eternal salvation, but further to excite the firm hope of attaining it. Now to deride and mock, as Your Reverence does, this doctrine because holy David prayed and did not always attain the light, and therefore supplicated: *Remember not my ignorances*; because other Saints prayed and did not always, nor in every prayer, obtain the favors requested, is a mockery, according to my weak judgment, the most monstrous, which can never be altogether excused. It can only in some manner be diminished, given the good intention and the inexperience in supposing that the same holy Doctors did not sometimes sin at least venially through negligence and ignorance, when they continually affirm the opposite.

IX. I ought here to extend myself a little further in placing in its proper light the false sense in which you likewise expound the doctrine of Saint Augustine concerning adultery committed with the Husband's consent. To excuse Your Reverence in this matter, it must be said that you copied both the text and the interpretation from your Father Platelli, a manifest teacher of Philosophical Sin. You adduce the authority of Father Domenico Viva, who not only reports badly the authority of Saint Augustine, but in the same place reports badly an authority of Saint Thomas, because he reports it marvelously truncated, exactly as the aforementioned Father Platelli produces it. I truly wished to pass it over; but since you four other Censors, Monti, Sanvitale, Ghezzi, and Lecchi, continually charge Father Concina, contrary to all truth, with truncations of texts, without ever having been able to allege a single one that was not sincerely produced, I see myself under the necessity of setting

before the eyes of the public the incredible truncation which both Father Platelli and Father Domenico Viva make of a text of Saint Thomas. And where? In the very place cited by Your Reverence, namely, at the second of the thirty-two propositions condemned by Alexander VIII. I say this so that the Reader may know that I disclose such things because compelled by you. And in order to teach both you and your four Fellow Soldiers how it is proved that an Author reports truncated texts, I shall place on one side the spurious text produced by Father Domenico Viva and on the other the genuine text of the Holy Doctor.

Truncated text of Saint Thomas reported by Father Domenico Viva

Saint Thomas, I-II, question 94, article 4. The natural law, as regards the first common principles, is the same among all; but as regards certain particulars, which are as it were conclusions of the common principles, it is the same among all, even in most cases, but in a few it can fail as regards knowledge: as among the Germans robbery was once not reputed unjust, although it is expressly against natural law. **Add**, Father Viva immediately adds, *in these remote conclusions which are deduced from Moral principles, even learned men have been deceived. For Durandus thought that simple fornication, according to natural law, was not a mortal sin, provided it was done by mutual consent and sufficient care was taken that the offspring should not be badly raised.*

Have you understood what the remote consequences from the principles of Evangelical Morality are? Theft, fornication, and consequently either all or the greater part of the Decalogue!

Genuine text of Saint Thomas

I-II, question 94, article 4. The natural law, as regards the first common principles, is the same among all both according to rectitude and according to knowledge; but as regards certain particulars, which are as it were conclusions of the common principles, it is the same among all, even in most cases, both according to rectitude and according to knowledge; but in a few cases it can fail both as regards rectitude, because of certain particular impediments - just as generable and corruptible natures also fail in a few cases because of impediments - and also as regards knowledge. AND THIS BECAUSE SOME HAVE DEPRAVED REASON FROM PASSION OR FROM AN EVIL HABIT OF NATURE. Thus among the Germans robbery was once not reputed unjust, although it is against natural law, as Julius Caesar reports in his book On the Gallic War.

The courteous Reader is now requested to fix one eye upon the spurious text and the other upon the legitimate and sincere text. In order that the truncation and the infidelity, or gross negligence, may appear and that similar new facts may remain proved with evidence, it is necessary to place the truncated text on one side and the complete text on the other. In this fashion the truth of the fact immediately strikes the eyes of the Readers.

X. Why, Reverend Father Lecchi, has none of you others thus far produced a truncated text of your Adversary Father Concina set opposite the genuine text? Why? Because of holy Charity, so as not to defame him? Why, then? Because you have not found one. For the rest, if you had found a text similar to that of Father Viva, I shall not say truncated but disemboweled, tearing out the middle words of the text, which alone decide the controversy, you would cry out against the Truncator, against the Fraudulent man, and with characters of a new form and in flying sheets you would have published it. And yet Father Concina has not until now reproached you with such a truncation, first made by your Father Platelli and then innocently, as it is proper to suppose, copied by the pious and learned Father Domenico Viva; and only now has he reproached you with it because provoked and constrained by Your Reverence.

XI. Let us return in passing to the authority of Saint Augustine, which I had resolved to pass over; but because you, Most Reverend Father, pride yourself upon exactness in reporting the texts of the Fathers and in defending your Casuists as men very expert and versed in the works of the Holy Fathers, I have changed my mind. At the same time I wish to demonstrate how sincere and exact both you and Father Platelli and Father Viva, from whom you probably copied what you write on page 194, are. Here you narrate that Father Domenico Viva, in the place cited, reports the authority of Saint Augustine taken from book 1 of the *Sermon on the Mount* without citing the chapter, which is 16; and Father Viva writes that it is 29, because he found it so written in his Father Platelli. For the rest, the whole Book is divided into only twenty-three chapters. But let us transcribe your words: *Moreover, Saint Augustine not only does not dare to condemn him of formal sin, but he does not even dare to assert that in a similar case there is Material sin. In view of these facts, Father Concina's Declamations against those Writers who affirm that invincible ignorance exists concerning many truths pertaining to natural law are immediately silenced.* Saint Augustine, then, does not condemn even of material sin adultery committed with the Husband's consent? But what would Your Reverence say, and what will the whole world say, when I show you that he condemns such an adulterer as guilty not only of material but of formal sin? The Father proposes the doubt whether a married man, with the consent of the other spouse, may lawfully fornicate: *But can that which the Apostle says - The woman does not have power over her own body, but the husband; likewise the husband does not have power over his own body, but the wife - have so much force that, if the wife, who has marital power over his body, permits it, the husband may lie with another woman who is neither another man's wife nor separated from her husband?* Here is the question, and here is the answer: *But it must not be thought so, lest even a woman should seem able to do this with her husband's permission, WHICH THE SENSE OF ALL EXCLUDES*. Having established his negative opinion as incontrovertible according to the sentiment of all - *which the sense of all excludes* - Your Reverence, to give new testimony of your sincerity, does not make even mention of this absolute and certain opinion. The Holy Father immediately adds that circumstances may occur such as to render such intercourse apparently lawful: *Although some causes may exist in which a Wife, with the Husband's consent, may seem able to do this for the Husband himself, as is reported to have happened at Antioch almost fifty years ago in the times of Constantius.* The case of Antioch is this. Acindynus, Prefect and former Consul, had condemned a man to a fine of one pound of gold under penalty of death. The miserable condemned man not having anything with which to pay, his beautiful Wife, solicited by a rich man with the promise of the pound of gold, obtained permission from her Husband and consented to him. Deceived in her payment by the guilty adulterer, who gave her earth instead of gold, she had recourse to the Judge Acindynus. Having heard of the fraud, he regarded himself as guilty for having driven the Spouses to such an extremity. Therefore he paid the fine to the treasury and declared the deceived Wife owner of the field from which the earth substituted for the gold had been taken. Having made this narration, he concludes: *I dispute nothing here in either direction; each is permitted to think what he wishes. For the story is not drawn from Divine authorities. Nevertheless, once this deed is narrated, human feeling does not so recoil from what was committed in that woman at her Husband's command AS BEFORE, when the thing itself was set forth without any example, we shuddered.* Augustine's doubt does not turn upon the truth of the doctrine, but upon the truth of the history, which, not being dictated by the Divine Writers, he leaves each person to judge according to his own sentiment; adding that this example does not render adultery so horrid to human feeling as it had appeared before absolutely, without such an example. Therefore Father Platelli, Father Viva, and Your Reverence write falsely that *Augustine does not dare to condemn as guilty of*

sin the man who, in order to avert his Wife's death, had permitted her use to another, from an erroneous judgment that this was lawful in such a case. The learned Modern of whom Father Lecchi makes mention excuses Father Viva for having proposed the case in terms more facilitating. But the excuse is unhappy for two reasons: both because it represents the death of the Wife when in the case of Antioch the death of the Husband is spoken of, and because, most of all, contrary to truth it affirms that *Augustine does not dare to condemn as guilty of sin, etc.*, when the Holy Father, as we have seen, expressly decides that that intercourse *the sense of all excludes*, and adds only that after the example of Antioch human feeling *does not so recoil from this as before*.

XII. Behold how many errors Your Reverence has obliged me to disclose, both your own and those of Father Viva and Father Platelli. Now if in these things, in which you provoke your Adversary, your wrong is so evident and you remain openly caught in errors that are not slight, let the Reader judge what things will be discerned concerning those innumerable and substantial points which you pass over in silence. I wish to transcribe another of your periods from page 195: *Compare for a little Father Concina's invectives in the first Dissertation against Tamburini, Azor, Tomás Sánchez, Rhodes, etc., because they affirm that invincible ignorance of some natural precepts is possible; compare them, I said, with the case of Antioch.*

XIII. Two great blunders in the few words transcribed. Father Concina speaks with so much trepidation concerning the possibility of invincible ignorance regarding natural law that he inclines rather to possibility than to impossibility. Father Concina therefore does not reproach the aforementioned Authors, nor so many distinguished Theologians, for the possibility of invincible ignorance concerning the remote consequences of natural law, if in this most grave controversy he confesses himself ignorant and surrounded by darkness. He reproaches the aforementioned Authors, and many others, for the invincible ignorance which they admit concerning the first Commandments of the Decalogue. He reproaches the Probabilists because they defend as invincible that ignorance which has coupled with it the more probable knowledge of the law. In the very long fifth chapter of the Appendix, volume 1, page 673 and following, he demonstrates with evidence that this Probabilistic invincible ignorance is a most monstrous paradox. And Your Reverence passes over in most profound silence this great point upon which the whole cause depends. Your Fellow Soldiers Sanvitale, Ghezzi, and Bovio likewise pass it over in silence. And then do you dare to boast that you are refuters of the *History of Probabilism*, if all together you have not yet attacked even one of the principal points, but have only nibbled now this word, now that one, now this period, now that one?

Chapter XII — Upon the Continuation of the Twelfth Warning: Splendid Encomia Bestowed upon Monsignor Martino Bonacina and upon the Clergy of Milan

CHAPTER XII
REFLECTIONS
UPON THE CONTINUATION OF THE TWELFTH WARNING
SPLENDID ENCOMIA BESTOWED UPON MONSIGNOR MARTINO BONACINA AND UPON THE CLERGY OF MILAN

I. In the addition to the twelfth *Warning* you expend four sections in weaving encomia for the Summists and the Casuists. It has never entered either my mind or Father Concina's to contest such praises with them; indeed, in the *History of Probabilism* encomia still more grandiose than yours have been recited. After mentioning the merits of Reginaldus, Sánchez, and others, you pause in section 4, page 206, to extol the wisdom of the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Bishop Monsignor Bonacina. The Panegyric which you make for him is so brilliant that I wish to transcribe a long passage from the section cited: *It would be a long and too tedious thing to run through the various Summas, otherwise deserving of much commendation for their utility and solid doctrine, such as those of Cardinal Toledo, Laymann, and Emmanuel Sa, who declares in the preface that for more than forty full years he labored to distill from the opinions of the Fathers the best juice of his Aphorisms of Christian Morality.* Father Sa's doctrine was not recognized at Rome as a distillate of the doctrine of the Fathers when it was necessary that it be purged of laxities by the Master of the Sacred Palace in order to permit its use. Read the *Index of Prohibited Books*, where you will find: *The Aphorisms for Confessors of Emmanuel Sa hitherto printed, even at Rome, before the year 1602. Those published at Rome after that time by order of the Master of the Sacred Palace are permitted.* I would not have published the proscription of this great Interpreter of the Fathers of yours if you had not forced me. I know that the public will remain surprised on seeing you almost always strike against fatal rocks at the very time when you flatter yourself that you are triumphing over your Adversary.

II. But let us transcribe the encomium of Bonacina: *Among the many, however*, you continue, *which pass from hand to hand, I cannot help pausing yet a little over one alone. Do you know which it is? Over that of the celebrated Bishop Bonacina. And a Writer already authorized by the experience of more than a century as Master and guide of Confessors and Parish Priests in a Diocese so remarkable for piety, learning, and zeal for Ecclesiastical discipline as the most ample Diocese of Milan well deserves to be remembered with a distinct encomium; a Writer approved by a long series of excellent and most vigilant Pastors, in each of whom the double spirit of Ambrose and Charles is renewed, lives, and is handed down in inheritance to their Successors; finally, a Writer for so many years deserving well of a Clergy which, in that which is the cultivation of Ecclesiastics in Moral Science, has few equals and perhaps, I dare say, no superior, because of the many most flourishing Academies over which preside men most consummate in experience and learning, whom every Diocese would consider itself greatly fortunate to have as Masters. And to tell the truth, Bonacina's method in the division of matters neither obscures by too much minuteness nor offends by confusion. In the use of terms he is plain and easy, faithful in citations; in adducing authorities nothing of ostentation appears, nothing of firmness is lacking. His genius, in that most difficult mean practiced by few, inclines rather to Rigor than to laxity.* Enough thus. The pen cannot bear to pass further.

III. Behold where the spirit of Party drives. I do not contest with Monsignor Martino Bonacina his merits. Let him be another Plato in sublimity of genius, another Vázquez in acuteness of thought. Nor do I defraud his Moral Theology of that praise which it deserves for clarity and facility of method and for any other commendable title. But that the Moral Theology of Monsignor Bonacina, sprinkled with condemned opinions and printed in the work itself in italics with an asterisk, should be proposed absolutely and without any exception as a Rule of Christian Consciences; that Bonacina should be placed at the head of the distinguished and vast Diocese of Milan so that he may serve as Master and guide to that most celebrated Clergy, without advising the public of the mortal and contagious poison contained in the said Bonacinian Theology, is a transport deserving more of tears than of reproach. Let Holy Church condemn Moya, Fabri, *Cleander and Eudoxus*, and Sa printed before 1602; however much they may have been the most respectable Fathers, they are seen cited as Masters and guides of Christianity. Let Holy Church also condemn false, erroneous, and scandalous opinions; for these either are not found in the Moralists, or, if they are found, have a different sense. By good fortune, in various impressions of Bonacina's *Morals*, the many condemned opinions are found marked with a special character. And an Author of this sort, you, Most Reverend Father Lecchi, propose to the public as Master of Confessors, as a Theologian who in the mean inclines rather to Rigor than to laxity? Will Bonacina therefore be a Rigorist? Will the many opinions existing in his *Short Summa* and condemned be condemned as excessively rigorous, not because too lax? Does Your Reverence begin from this to perceive the beauty of the Panegyric woven for the Master and Guide of the great Diocese of Milan? You exalt the Milanese Clergy above every other Clergy of the Catholic World by saying that every Diocese would consider itself greatly fortunate to have as Masters these distinguished Scholars of the Casuist Bonacina. For my part, I venerate with due respect the celebrated Clergy of Milan. I know that in this illustrious Body there are Men most distinguished both for doctrine and for erudition, and to my honor and glory I ascribe the friendship which I have with some of them. But I esteem this distinguished Clergy, not because I suppose it a scholar of Bonacina, but because I believe it a follower of the doctrine of both Saint Ambrose and Saint Charles. Your Reverence writes that in the Priests of Milan the spirit of Ambrose and of Charles is doubled. But you intend that this spirit passes through the channel of Bonacina's *Summa*, and in this you err greatly. I wish to narrate to you an event which occurred in these days. Among learned men there was discussion of the scandalous opinions contained in the two Casuists Mazzuchelli and Sammaruga. *What?* one replied. *These Casuists are studied by the Clergy of Milan. It is not possible*, the others answered, *that that learned Clergy should regard as Masters similar Books deserving to be condemned. It may be that some ignorant Confessor, some poor Priest, reads such little Summas.* For the rest, it seems that without injury Mazzuchelli, Sammaruga, Bonacina, and similar Casuists cannot be attributed as Masters to the Illustrious Clergy of Milan. And I am persuaded that this Clergy will not receive with good grace Father Lecchi's praise in making it a disciple of Bonacina's *Summa*. I venerate and esteem, as I have said, this great Clergy because I suppose it the fortunate heir of the doctrine of its incomparable Saint Charles, glorious restorer of Ecclesiastical discipline; because I am persuaded that in regulating the consciences of the faithful it avails itself not of the Bonacinas, not of the Mazzuchellis, nor of the Sammarugas, but of the truly golden INSTRUCTIONS of the Most Holy Archbishop. It is true that the Reverend Father Baldassare Francholini, an associate of Father Lecchi, shows himself little favorable to these *Instructions* of the great Saint Charles, reporting that they are adapted to the iron disposition of the Milanese. But Your Reverence is not ignorant in what

veneration these holy *Instructions* are held among all learned men. It appears to me that you would have brought greater praise to the distinguished Clergy of Milan by declaring it Heir of the sound doctrine of its Archbishop Saint Charles than by proclaiming it a disciple of Monsignor Martino Bonacina. Nor would you have stirred against yourself the indignation of so many other Clergies of Europe, no less celebrated and no less learned, by saying that they would consider themselves greatly fortunate to have the Disciples of Bonacina as their Masters, when these for the greatest part profess implacable war against Probabilism and against so many lax and scandalous opinions condemned by Holy Church and printed in italics in Bonacina, the Hero of your Panegyric.

IV. But let us say two words in passing for the instruction of all those who will read this writing. Behold: Books containing many condemned propositions are proposed as an exemplar of Christian Morality. It is believed that the ruin which such condemned doctrines cause to souls is remedied by causing them to be printed in a different typeface, as though the poison were enclosed in those few material words which compose the proposition. It is not reflected, nor is there any wish to reflect, that such condemned propositions are frequently capital principles from which very long consequences derive. So many poor Clerics and Priests, in order to render themselves capable of hearing confessions, study Bonacina, by way of example. When they encounter the condemned proposition printed in italics and with an asterisk, they pass it over as a fatal error. But both the opinions preceding and those following, regulated by the same proposition and often necessary consequences of it, they drink as healthful waters; they adopt them as doctrines most sound and most safe. And they hold them all the more as sound doctrines and practice them in the Confessional, the more they read both in your *Warnings*, Father Lecchi, and in so many other similar modern Writers, Bonacina, Sánchez, Escobar, Diana, and Tamburini extolled as Masters of Christian doctrine. Hence it comes about that so many Christians in practice are really directed by doctrines either condemned or daughters of, or akin to, condemned opinions. Behold where these encomia of the less cautious Modern Casuists of yours end, Most Esteemed Father Lecchi. Behold indicated to you the fatal ruin which they cause. And why, in praising in Bonacina that which is worthy of praise, is that which is contagious in him not manifested? Why, if you animate Confessors to read in Bonacina that which is good, do you not advise them to shun that which is poisonous? If it were possible to pass over in silence the errors contained in Bonacina's *Summa* without prejudice to souls, I would accept such silence as good. You will say that it is necessary to use charity toward poor deceased Authors. I grant it, when this charity is not false and pernicious to the human race. What? Are the errors condemned in Bonacina and in others like him to be kept silent, with grave danger that less cautious Readers receive these errors as safe rules by which to direct the consciences of the Faithful? This is a mask of fallacious charity, of which a long treatment has been made in the *Critical Observations upon Father Sanvitale's Little Book*; and therefore I do not wish to enlarge further at present. For my part, if I recommended the reading of the very *Little Summa* of the Learned Cardinal Cajetan, I would consider myself obliged to advise the Reader that in the said *Little Summa* there are some propositions to be avoided, and I would indicate them one by one. But let this suffice upon the matter for now.

V. Once again you undertake to speak of Father Viva, and, if I do not conjecture badly, with your customary unhappiness. Since you do not know how to discover in the Author of the *History* even the shadow of negligence in sincerely reporting the Latin texts of your Theologian, you seize upon this expedient of calling a vernacular rendering of Father Viva's text a period by which your Adversary

indicates what Father Viva means. I invite the public to read your page 208; and when the vernacular period which precedes the Latin text is judged to be a vernacular rendering of Viva's text, I shall lose this point of the cause. You yourself confess that the word *only* is in the Latin text transcribed by Father Concina. Therefore it is an open imposture to accuse him of infidelity. After having smoothed the way for yourself with the invention of a thing which really is not in your Adversary, you pass to report other good Latin texts of Father Viva, as though the Author of the *History* had pretended that all the texts of this learned Theologian were subject to censorial criticism. He criticized in Father Viva and in other Casuists only the texts which he judged deserving of critical observations, and he praised the good texts and opinions. I do not judge it fitting to spend further time in refuting vain objections.

Chapter XIII — A Brief Reflection upon the Final Paragraph of the Warnings

CHAPTER XIII

A BRIEF REFLECTION UPON THE FINAL PARAGRAPH OF THE WARNINGS

I. In this final section of yours you first narrate to your Lord Count the grave temptation suffered during the whole time in which you composed these *Warnings* of yours. And what, then, is this great temptation? *You can imagine it*, you write on page 211. *Amid that thick abundance of witnesses convicted in judgment of falsehood by evident fact, I saw myself assailed on every side, now by one, now by another of those censures which on similar occasions run to the tongue and whistle beneath the pen.*

II. Tell me, if you please, Your Reverence, in what Judgment were those witnesses in so thick an abundance examined by you convicted of falsehood? At the Judgment of Father Lecchi, you reply. But is he, your Adversary will rejoin, a competent Judge? He will appeal the cause, as you know, to the Judgment of the Learned, before whom he holds victory as certain.

III. You continue: *For learned and pious men a good course is always ready. And what, you will tell me, is it? To declare frankly that they have made a mistake. This glorious correction causes them no fear. They have before their eyes the heroic examples of a Saint Augustine and of so many other most learned and most holy Writers. As for the loss of their own honor, which is so greatly feared by weak souls, first they count it as nothing; and then they know that in this abasement consists the true glory of the Christian.*

IV. At the end of your Book you supply the basis for the most important and most natural comments. I shall indicate one or two of them in passing. But first it is necessary that I premise an inquiry to you. Do you believe, Most Esteemed Father, that the Sánchezes, the Tamburinis, the Escobars, the Terillos, the Castropalaos, the Baunys, the Busenbaums, the Vivas, and so many others accused of lax and condemned opinions existing in their vast and voluminous works really fell into some error? If you deny it, you exalt these and other similar Casuists above Saint Augustine and above so many other most holy Writers. Worse: if you deny it, you come to infer that the opinions condemned by the Church were invented at whim. Nor can you answer that they are in the Dominican, Franciscan, Theatine, Augustinian Casuists, etc., because these will show you that they are found in greater or equal abundance in those aforementioned. If, then, as is necessary, you affirm it, why does Your Reverence deprive these rare Writers of the glorious Correction? Why do the heroic Examples of an Augustine and of so many other most learned and most holy Writers make no impression upon you? If the aforementioned Casuists were alive, I hold it as certain that they would confess their blunders. You who assume their role, why do you refuse to retract their errors? For a century and a half very many of your Casuists have from time to time been accused of lax opinions. And you and many others of your genius have undertaken the defense of these Casuists, always crying out that the texts reported are truncated, are altered, are interpreted in reverse, and that Father Viva's little Latin texts are not understood. You have always defended, and defend, these Casuists as Canonical Writers immune from every error. Is it possible that all the texts reported in the *History* and in the *Appealing Lent* are either truncated or altered or falsified? And yet neither you, nor Father Ghezzi, nor Father Monti, nor Father Sanvitale, nor Father Bovio has retracted a single one. No one until now has wished to put into effect your maxim described above: *They know that in this abasement consists the true*

glory of the Christian. I wish to suppose as certain that this virtuous abasement is found in the depth of your heart. But the public joins with you in desiring it as it is seen in Augustine: printed in Books for edification. You will perhaps answer that Saint Augustine retracted his opinions believed less true because at that time there was no Probabilism which justified even the opinions less near to truth, as is found in our fortunate centuries.

V. But let us take up your text again: *Besides, there is still another advantage for Father Concina, which he certainly will not wish to let escape from his hand. He has written, he has said many things in favor of severe Morality and to the reproach of the Laxists. Let him be blessed a thousand times. Do you think that such a man needs to be warned by others that an act so heroic as pronouncing and writing those magnanimous words, I have erred, would canonize his severe Morality?*

VI. Your Reverence is reduced to this extremity of blessing the errors of your Adversary. Father Concina has written many things in favor of severe Morality and to the reproach of the Laxists. *Let him be blessed a thousand times.* He has therefore written the truth. And for having written the truth, is he to pronounce the false words: *I have erred*? Let this be said to give relief to your shrewd and brilliant manner of writing. For the rest, I know how to tell you with certainty that Father Concina confesses himself a *poor man*, as you call him, surrounded on every side by the darkness of ignorance. With his Saint Thomas he prays and supplicates: *If anything has been said badly or less well, I ask pardon and accept correction. For I know that I am a weak man, lesser in the understanding of justice, judgment, and laws, and surrounded and wrapped in the darkness of ignorance. Wherefore I always implore the Light itself, which shines in the darkness, that it may deign to illuminate my heart, purge error in me, and lead me to the perfection of eternal life.* Opusculum 73, *On Usury*, if indeed it is his. From the beginning, when, compelled, Father Concina entered the arena with some of you, he made this humble confession of his in the Apologetic Preface to the *Appealing Lent*. He confessed and confesses that he erred not once but a thousand times, both in his speaking and in his writing. And if he believed otherwise, he would consider himself, as the holy text says, blind and deceived. His darkness, by Divine mercy, is not so thick that he does not know these truths. You, Most Esteemed Father Lecchi, would wish Father Concina to confess that he erred in transcribing the texts of your Casuists; you would wish him to confess these Casuists infallible and their Books immune from every error, so that all the world may read these Books as distillates of the opinions of the Fathers, as you write of Emmanuel Sa's *Summa*, condemned by the Church before 1602. This is the glorious correction; this is the heroic abasement which, for the honor of your Casuists, you would desire. You would wish Father Concina to confess that he erred in refuting your lax doctrine on fasting; but he cannot do this, in view of the two Pontifical Briefs of Benedict XIV and a Rescript of his to seven Questions stirred up - you know by whom - upon this matter. You would wish him to retract his two Letters against the scandalous doctrine of mammillary touches and of Blasphemies through custom. But he cannot, the Book which defended such erroneous opinions being condemned. What, then, must Father Concina retract? The singular and continual encomia which in all his Books he makes of your Illustrious Society? He will never do so; on the contrary, he will make still greater ones whenever an opportune occasion occurs. What, then, must Father Concina retract? The refutation of Probabilism? But neither so many Councils nor the wisest men of our age permit him. What, then, must he retract? The many Casuistic texts represented as full of false and lax doctrines? But he transcribed them with complete fidelity and with such exactness that all of you together have not been capable of catching him in fault in one single text. Come, let us finish it. Most Esteemed Father Lecchi, let us set aside figures and

ceremonies and speak to one another with Evangelical sincerity. Your Reverence knows that various of your Confreres in these days have printed Books in defense of condemned doctrines. The two *Salutary Warnings* were printed by Father F. in defense of the prohibited Book of Father B. The *Judgment of a Certain Theologian* by Father T. was printed in defense of condemned doctrine and is sold in Venice. The condemned *Retraction*, as an infamous Libel, was reprinted in Lucca and is sold by some of your Confreres who for now are not named. You must employ all your eloquence in persuading these Associates of yours to write those magnanimous words: I HAVE ERRED. *It is therefore to be hoped that with this stroke they will once put all the Rigorists into disorder and make them fall silent*, thus you write on page 212. Ah, Most Esteemed Father Lecchi, who ever induced you to touch similar keys, compelling your Adversaries to remind you of things which they certainly would have passed over? For my part I firmly believe that this is an act of heavenly Providence, in order to awaken you and so many who, without the necessary discernment, render blind belief to you amid so many sonorous and clamorous facts, with most grave danger to themselves. I protest before that God who is to judge me that I speak only of those private individuals who imprudently engage in the defense of either false or condemned opinions, never of those many who with holiness of life and with zeal for sound doctrine illustrate the Church of Christ.

Specimen of the Theological Dissertation On the Use of Opinions in Moral Matters

SPECIMEN
OF THE
THEOLOGICAL DISSERTATION
On the Use of Opinions in Moral Matters, etc.
PRINTED AT EINSIDLEN · 1744

§ I

§ I

It was my thought not to say even a word about that *Theological Dissertation* of which the Reverend Father Bovio of the distinguished Society of Jesus is said to be the Author. It is not directed, at least expressly, against the *History of Probabilism*; in it no mention is made of Father Concina; his arguments are not refuted, nor are his doctrines called to examination. Why then take up the pen against it? Thus I went on reasoning. But to all my friends it seemed reasonable, if not to refute it, at least, at least to offer the Readers a brief specimen of it. All agreed not to undertake the refutation of abstract subtleties, dissipated a thousand times. It is enough only, they said, to give a brief compendium of it, so that the Reader may, if it agrees with his palate, digest it all for himself. I did not think I should resist the suggestion, and therefore in a few pages I shall make an extract of it. Before, however, I set myself to do it, I must commend the modesty, gravity, and honesty of the Reverend Father Bovio in treating his cause. In this he has distinguished himself and set himself apart from his seven or eight Confreres who have written against Friar Concina. He has treated his cause, true according to him, without insulting anyone whatever. As much as the opinion which he defends is judged by us to be groundless, so much is the wisdom and probity of the Defender praised; let this be said to the glory of Truth and of Father Bovio.

§ II — A Heap of Distinctions and Subdistinctions with Which the Reverend Father Bovio Has Clouded Over and Obscured His Probabilism

§ II

A HEAP OF DISTINCTIONS AND SUBDISTINCTIONS WITH WHICH THE REVEREND FATHER BOVIO HAS CLOUDED OVER AND OBSCURED HIS PROBABILISM. HIS ERROR CONCERNING THE PROBABILISM OF THE ACADEMICS.

I. The *Theological Dissertation* of the Reverend Father Bovio is divided into ten parts. Of those ten parts, six parts are employed in explaining the state of the controversy, the terms, the particles, the distinctions, and the rules of the cause itself. These six parts contain thirty-seven chapters. In the other four parts are reported the arguments of the Probabilists, of the Equiprobabilists, and of the Probabiliorists. The Reverend Father Bovio has shown more judgment, and has been much more circumspect, than the other three of his Confreres, Ghezzi, Lecchi, and Sanvitale, defenders of Probabilism. He has imitated his most able Probabilists, who judged it advantageous to their cause to shut the debated Probabilistic point within the impenetrable labyrinth of subtleties beyond common capacity. The celebrated Father Terill calls Probabilism a *Mystery covered with veils and figures*. With reason, therefore, the Reverend Father Bovio, treading in the footsteps of those able Theologians, has surrounded Probabilism with redoubled ranks of distinctions, of subdistinctions, of direct probability, of reflex probability, of practical probability, of speculative probability, of tenuous probability, of some probability, of minimal probability, of benign probability, of rigid probability, of middling probability, of grave probability, of solid probability, of probably probable probability, of certainly probable probability, of probable, of more probable, of equiprobable, of most probable, of moderate Tutiorism, of mitigated Tutiorism, of rigid Tutiorism. He explains what the particles mean: *By grave Authority, by grave reason*. Probabilism having been placed inside the keep of those innumerable and insuperable exterior fortifications, it stands firm and strong against all the most powerful assaults. The Reverend Father Bovio leads his Reader through all these lines of circumvallation; he makes him go round and round all those ravelins: now he explains one thing to him, and now another; now he instructs him to ward off a false alarm, and now to frustrate a true assault with some sudden and unanticipated sally. The mind of the poor Reader, wearied and exhausted in the very long circuit of so many subtleties and in the hundredfold speculations upon terms, adverbs, adjectives, and adjuncts, when it is near fixing its gaze in order finally to contemplate the great Probabilistic arcane, has neither breath nor strength left to do it. Wherefore, confused within the windings and circles of so many artful preparations, he apprehends one thing for another, and understands nothing of Probabilism, because he is bewildered among dense thickets of most subtle sophistries.

II. Does not this single web of terms and densest globe of words, by which Probabilism is garrisoned, suffice to make perceptibly known that a system of opinion so thorny and murky cannot be a rule for Christian consciences? Moral doctrines are simple, plain, and precise. For fifteen centuries our Forebears regulated consciences with these few words: *In doubts the safer part must be chosen; hold to the certain, leave the uncertain. Beware of every appearance of evil.* That light spread by God upon the face of our souls, which in temporal controversies over boundaries, lawsuits, and interest dictates to us that we follow what we recognize as more probable or safer, with greater force enjoins us to practice the same in controversies concerning our eternal salvation. But from the time Probabilism was born into the

World, these most convincing natural examples have been called Theatrical, and the Divine or natural light spread upon the face began to be called direct light, subjected to another reflex light begotten by Probabilism, which directs and drags the direct light after itself. Now, in order to sustain a system so contrary to natural light, there was need of the garrison of the aforesaid innumerable subtleties.

III. I may perhaps seem to someone less versed in the Probabilistic invention to represent the doctrine of the *Theological Dissertation* of the Reverend Father Bovio with colors too odious and less than sincere. But to demonstrate in a perceptible manner the fidelity of my portrait, I wish to authenticate it with Father Bovio's own words. In the *History*, Probabilism was compared, with Saint Augustine, to the roots of the thorn plant. The roots of the thorn, hidden within the veins of the earth, are soft and pliable; the branches of the thorn are harsh and pernicious, because they prick and draw blood. Probabilism beneath the veils of subtleties and the encumbrances of distinctions does not prick, does not arouse horror, because it is not known. The moment that it bursts forth from the dense thickets of metaphysical abstractions and descends to practice, it makes itself felt for what it is. I shall therefore leave untouched the subtleties, speculations, and distinctions of which the Dissertation of our Author is composed. I shall report only a few passages in which certain practical truths are touched upon.

IV. I shall begin with a lighter matter. In the first part of the *Dissertation*, chapter IV, he undertakes to distinguish the Probable of the Academics from the Probable which the Catholic Probabilists defend. And here the error of the Academics, who denied all certain knowledge of truth, is confused with the probable which, once that error was supposed, they admitted. The error of denying all certain knowledge of truth is what Augustine learnedly attacks, especially with the long text against Cicero reported in the *History of Probabilism* and then also produced by Father Bovio. In all else, once that error is rejected, the Probable of the Academics is certainly more reasonable than modern Probabilism. Never did they arrive at that excess of granting that it is lawful to follow the less probable opinion; rather, on the contrary, they taught that the opinion which comes closer to truth ought to be embraced, as Marcus Tullius expressly maintains in several places reported in the *History*, dissertation I, chapter I, volume I: *Nor do our disputations*, he writes in book II of the *Academic Questions*, *do anything else except that, by speaking and hearing on either side, they may elicit and, as it were, express what may be true or what may come nearest to it*.

V. The celebrated Jean Mabillon, in the *Treatise on Monastic Studies*, part II, chapter 7, observes that it is so far from true that the Probabilism of the Academics, separated from the aforementioned error, was worse than modern Probabilism, that, on the contrary, it is incomparably better. *Is there*, writes the most learned Mabillon, *among Casuists in matters of Probability a rule more just than that which Cicero assigns? Cicero's rule is this: It is not lawful to act when you doubt whether the action is just or unjust. Justice gives forth a certain splendor which manifests itself wherever it is found; and when you doubt whether a thing is just or not, it is a sign that some sort of injustice is present. Therefore those rightly command who forbid one to do anything about which one doubts whether it is equitable or inequitable; for equity shines of itself. Doubt indicates a thought of injustice.* Book *On Duties*, chapter X, Padua edition. *How many cases of conscience*, concludes Mabillon, *would remain decided by this excellent principle if Christians wished to follow it*. It is therefore manifest that the Reverend Father Bovio has strayed far from the truth concerning the Probabilism of the Academics, of whom Cicero was a follower.

§ III — Fine Doctrines of Father Bovio on Direct and Reflex Probabilism

§ III

FINE DOCTRINES OF FATHER BOVIO ON DIRECT AND REFLEX PROBABILISM. HIS COMMENTS UPON THE DECREES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS TO FOLLOW THE MORE PROBABLE OPINION. HIS SINGULAR PERSPICUITY AND CLARITY IN EXPOUNDING THE CLEAR AND LIMPID SENSE OF THE SAID DECREES.

I. The six parts of the *Dissertation* of the Reverend Father Bovio and its thirty-seven chapters have not been sufficient to make clear the state of the Controversy. Indeed, they serve for nothing else than to wrap it in the thickest mists of an impenetrable obscurity. Even in the introduction he presents as something certain and outside controversy that the less Probable opinion in comparison contains a grave and solid Probability. No Theologian denies that the use of grave and solid Probability is lawful. The point lies in proving that the less Probable opinion in comparison, in relation to the same person who forms the opinion, is adorned with such prerogatives. The Probabilists suppose it, and with them the Reverend Father Bovio, but until now they have never alleged a sufficient reason. And it is an intolerable thing that these Gentlemen, after so many most just reproaches that they labor upon a false supposition, have not resolved once to justify themselves against this most just accusation. Now, in order to execute what I promised, namely to say that the *Theological Dissertation* does not make the present cause clear, but wraps it in thick darkness, I shall begin to transcribe a fairly long passage from the Reverend Father Bovio himself. So long as he remains subtly probabilizing upon the abstract and within the entrenchments of the customary distinctions, he hides, as has been said, all the Probabilistic deformity; but when he is compelled to emerge from these trenches and to explain some practical point, then it is known of what weight and solidity his *Dissertation* is. In part I, chapter 6, page 26, he ventures to explain the laws of many Cloistered Religions which prescribe following the more probable opinion in Moral Controversies. Now, in order to evade such laws in some manner, he writes things which alone suffice to demonstrate the clarity, neatness, and precision of this *Theological Dissertation*. I wish to transcribe all and everything that he writes upon this point, so that recourse may not be had to the customary evasion of truncated texts. Here, then, is the long text.

II. *From this likewise most true understanding of the safer opinion you will understand what the true sense is of the laws or ordinances of certain Religious Orders which prescribe following the safer doctrine; and yet they do not command their Masters to embrace in the present controversy this party or that, neither Catholic and mitigated Tutiorism, nor Probabiliorism, nor Equiprobabilism, nor Probabilism.* What, then, do these laws command, if they impose none of the aforesaid things? But let us continue to transcribe the text. *First, they speak to the Masters, and certainly they do not prescribe to them that, when the opinions of the Doctors vary concerning the law and the lawful, and both parties are probable, they should always say that there is a law, although they deem it more verisimilar that there is none; because this would be not only against the truthfulness and the obligation of Masters, but also against the practice of all the Doctors, who in such questions conclude now for the existence of the law, now for the liberty of the action, according to what seems to them more true. Therefore it is clear and manifest that these DECREES do not command the embracing, among the probable opinions, of the Safer in the first signification, according to which the opinion that affirms the law, although it is less verisimilar, is the safer, because*

following it in acting is secure even from material nonconformity with some law that perhaps existed. This first admonition truly could have been omitted as something superfluous. What follows is the finest.

III. *Second, neither do these Decrees enjoin the Masters that, when it comes into controversy among Catholic Doctors whether the agent is obliged to follow the probable, or the more probable, or the equally probable opinion which affirms the law, they should decide for the obligation. But rather that, no less in this than in the other questions, they teach that which, all things considered, they find to be more verisimilar, and in this sense safer. Wherefore, if a Master sincerely judges - what so many Theologians have believed - that it is safer indeed to counsel the use of the probable opinion favorable to the law, but not to make it a charge of grave obligation, nor to forbid the agent to follow the opposite side, which has notable Doctors for it, he conforms to his laws by teaching this which he regards as safer. For just as in the direct examination of this or that opinion every reason dictates that the Master teach that which he finds more verisimilar, so every reason wills that also in this reflex controversy he say that which he regards as more true.*

IV. You have understood this most beautiful admonition, in which is contained all the juice of the system of Caramuel and of Terill and of the Probabilistic Mystery. You judge it more probable directly that Sempronius is obliged to pay his debts immediately. And you regard it as safer to counsel him to do so. But through a reflex dictate, whereby it is known that notable Doctors teach the opposite, you make Sempronius understand that, if he wishes to pay, he will perform a good act of supererogation, but otherwise he is absolutely free from the burden of grave obligation. And when the Regular Probabilist teaches thus, he conforms to the laws of teaching the more probable, because that which is less probable according to the direct dictate becomes more probable by virtue of the reflex dictate. It seems to me that this is the sense of this second comment, in truth a little tangled. And yet the Reverend Father Bovio continues thus.

V. *With this clear notion* - O luminous clarity! - *of the safer opinion with regard to Masters, you can perceive how certain Religions, no less than their most illustrious Writers, remain justified. Merenda and Fagnano report that the Venerable Order of the Theatine Fathers obliged its members to follow the more probable opinions in the year 1598. The words are not produced from which the legitimate sense of that Decree may be seen. But if that Distinguished Religion ordered its members to hold and teach the more probable doctrines, and also to counsel their use, the fact that none of its Doctors nearest to the Decree taught such an opinion, but rather both Theologians and Canonists held the opposite, is nevertheless a very strong argument that it did not then order them to teach that it was a sin to follow the solidly probable opinion; for it seems equally absurd to assert both that at that time the men most estimable in it for age and learning disobeyed their law and that it did not impede them.* I leave it to the Reverend Theatine Fathers to defend themselves upon this point. If that Religion commanded the following of the more probable doctrines, it did not decree that it was a sin also to follow the solidly probable opinion, that is, the less probable; but it is called solidly probable because that *solidly* is a shield and a strong outwork for defending Probabilism. He who commands virtue does not forbid the contrary vice unless he says so, especially if some Subjects near to the law are seen practicing the opposite. Because four or six Casuists before 1600 taught the less probable opinion, the Religion, in commanding that the more probable doctrines be taught, did not condemn as sinful the teaching of the opposing less probable doctrines. What acute and judicious interpretations! But let us continue to transcribe the final part of Father Bovio's text, which beyond doubt is the finest.

VI. *Say the same of the Constitution of the Jesuits, part IV, chapter 5, number 4, where, speaking of the doctrine which their Scholars ought to embrace, it says: In every faculty let them follow the safer and more approved doctrine,*

and those Authors who teach it; the care of this matter shall belong to the Rector, who is to follow what shall be established throughout the whole Society for the greater glory of God. It is conspicuous that here it is a question of teaching the more probable doctrines. This is demonstrated both by the subject of that chapter and by the phrase in every faculty, *that is, in natural Philosophy, in Scholastic Theology, in Dogmatic, in Scriptural, in Moral Theology, etc.; wherefore there is no need of commentary to demonstrate that here Tutiorism, whether rigid or not rigid, is not established; that the agent is not obliged to follow the opinion of the law every time that it is probable; but that it speaks of the more approved doctrines in every Faculty, which must be embraced by the Masters. And here the argument taken from the fact already adduced above is valid. Did perhaps the Venerable Servant of God and Eminent Doctor Francisco Suarez, who by his Religion has always been regarded as a mirror of observance in that Institute which he so greatly illustrated and defended in volume IV,* On Religion; *and the Venerable Father Luis de Ponte, known equally for his excellent virtues and for his works full of doctrine and piety, support an assertion contradictory to their Constitution, or did they defend that which their Religion prohibited, when they taught the lawful use of the Probable opinion; and may the same be said of many others? Certainly not; but they understood that they conformed to the Constitution when in the present controversy they held that side which appeared to them either morally certain or at least more Probable. Indeed the same Religion, which moreover by new Decrees confirmed the aforesaid Constitution, expressly declared in the Twelfth General Congregation that concerning this question it wished it to be free to hold that opinion which the Professor regarded as more probable.*

VII. I beg the Readers to ponder this text well together with the others described, without regard to the Reverend Father Bovio, to whom all respect and veneration are due, since with a pious and sincere intention he has written that which he judged opportune in order to expound the said laws in some sense favorable to Probabilism. This long comment must therefore be considered in itself, and from it the true sense must be gathered, if it is possible. I say, if it is possible, because I have never read an interpretation more entangled, more confused than this. Here I see nothing but a conglomeration of contradictions. This will perhaps be the effect of my weakness and short capacity. I shall nevertheless indicate in passing the reasons which constrain me to think thus. The aforementioned laws command the embracing in every Controversy of the *safer doctrine*. Here Tutiorism is not commanded. To whom has the precept of such Tutiorism ever come into mind? And a good part of the comment is consumed in confusing the mind with an interpretation wholly superfluous. In the comparison, therefore, of two opinions, one more and the other less probable, they command the use of the more probable. What is answered? It is affirmed and it is denied, with so much confusion that it becomes incomprehensible. One would wish, and one would not wish, to state one's whole sentiment. Let us explain it all in two words. Those laws command the following of Probabilism. How? They command the following of the *safer doctrine*, and in commanding this they prescribe following the less probable, less safe doctrine? Has a stranger paradox ever been heard, an understanding more repugnant to a text? When the Superior imposes the embracing of the safer side in doubtful disputes, must we understand the less safe? This is an objection made against Father Bovio's interpretation, who expressly writes that they are obliged to follow that side which appears to them either morally certain or more probable. It is true, but at the same time he deliberately denies it. Here in a few words is the juice of his doctrine. The sacred laws of the Religious Orders command the embracing, not of Direct Probabiliorism, but of Reflex Probabiliorism. What is this Reflex Probabiliorism? Here it is. You regard the doctrine which obliges the Lord Count to pay his debts immediately as the more probable, the safer. But at the same time you know that Notable Doctors, such as Castropalao, Sanchez, Tamburini, Escobar, Bonacina, Caramuel, Leander, Stoz, and Ilshung,

release the Lord Count from obligation. You observe that this doctrine among modern Probabilists is the most approved and in practice the most universal. By virtue of the authority of these Notable Doctors you form a reflex dictate, by whose marvelous energy that which according to that direct light spread by God upon your mind was less probable, less safe, by a prodigious metamorphosis becomes safer and more probable. And the Reverend Father Bovio proves this interpretation of his by the authority of Diana, Molfesius, Filippino, and Pasqualigo, Theatines who taught Probabilism. He confirms it with the other, greater authority of the two Venerable men Suarez and da Ponte. But why not produce two certain Probabilists, and among the first, such as Vazquez and Sanchez? Certainly there is a grave dispute among the Jesuits whether Suarez and da Ponte were Probabilists. Camargo, the great General Tirso Gonzalez, and Elizalde frankly deny that Suarez and da Ponte were Probabilists. This is an incontestable fact. Why then not produce the two more ancient Probabilists, Vazquez and Sanchez? Perhaps because they are not Venerable? Perhaps because they are of lesser authority? But in the matter of Probabilism certainly Vazquez and Sanchez have written more than Suarez and da Ponte. Why then produce those concerning whom there is a most grave dispute whether or not they were Probabilists, rather than those who according to all are two Standard-bearers of Direct Probabilism? But let us pass over this and recite the final part of the commentary. Thus he concludes immediately on page 28.

VIII. *Therefore, when these or other Religious Orders command the avoiding of broad opinions, the following of the safer and more approved, the resolving of cases by inclining toward the safer, the striving to persuade it, and similar things, they wish nothing else than that their Professors and Confessors: 1. In every question decide that which they judge either certain or more verisimilar.* Thus far everything is clear, conspicuous, and limpid. Therefore the teachers of Probabilism contravene the laws. So much is confirmed by the words which immediately follow. *2. That they not be easy to let themselves be led by reasons which are offered to them as stronger when they are contrary to more respectable and graver authority, of which they ought to make a just estimation. 3. That, in order to escape the danger of laxity, they have affection rather for the side of the law. 4. That they counsel according to this, especially when the other side is not more verisimilar.* What Antiprobabilist could have spoken better and prescribed the soundest rules? Thus far the Reverend Father Bovio declares himself an Antiprobabilist and a zealous condemner of Probabilism. The words immediately added appear to entangle the truth a little. Let us transcribe them.

IX. *All of which do not conflict with any of the classic opinions enumerated by us above concerning the present controversy; but they do not prescribe the teaching* - now we strike the reef - *that it is a sin to follow either the solidly Probable, or the Equiprobable, or the more probable opinion which dictates that it is lawful, even when the opposite is probable.* This is the impenetrable enigma. What does the first phrase *solidly probable* signify? Until now the three-membered scheme has been formed thus: less Probable, equiprobable, more probable. Do the aforementioned laws prohibit, or do they not prohibit, teaching the less probable in comparison with the more probable? Here a precise answer is required. If no, then everything which you have written thus far in saying that those laws command the teaching of the more verisimilar is false. If yes, then all the teachers of Probabilism are transgressors of the aforementioned laws. Let us finish with the recital of the final words. *The truth of such an understanding is strengthened when it is seen that their Writers freely embrace one or the other of the aforesaid opinions, as they judge more expedient. And if the Professors of some Order commonly regard themselves as bound to one of the said opinions, their understanding and the common custom will be an excellent interpreter of their law, which they will easily follow. And let this be said concerning the second notion of the Safer opinion.*

X. Do you wish for a more benign, more favorable interpretation? When the Subjects act differently, in this case the law concedes that which pleases them most. These paradoxes appear incredible. By virtue of this comment all the Casuists will be saved in their various Religions. If, as the Reverend Father Bovio writes, *The truth of such an understanding is strengthened when it is seen that their Writers freely embrace one or the other of the aforesaid opinions, as they judge more expedient*; if, I say, this is true, it follows that the practice of contrary actions, of virtue and of vice, is in conformity with the law. I confess that my very weak capacity does not comprehend these mysterious enigmas of the Reverend Father Bovio. On the one side he shows himself a most zealous Antiprobabilist; on the other he resists condemning Probabilism. Now he appears to say that the laws counsel the use of the more probable and command the use of Probabilism. Now he seems to wish to say that they prescribe the following of the more probable, but do not impute as a fault the use of the less probable opinion, which he calls *solidly probable*: that is, they command the embracing of the true, but do not condemn as culpable the following even of the false, when it is regarded as expedient and fitting by Professors and Consultors. For my part, I submit the aforesaid commentary to the judgment of the more learned, and I protest that I have not understood it. I know that the Probabilists will ascribe this to my limited capacity; but let them know that I have had it read by most capable Men, and they too have found it a play upon words, a conglomeration of contradictions. When the cause is bad, even intelligent Men speak and write unhappily.

§ IV — Singular Reply of Father Bovio to the Argument of the Judge Compared with the Confessor

§ IV

SINGULAR REPLY OF FATHER BOVIO TO THE ARGUMENT OF THE JUDGE COMPARED WITH THE CONFESSOR

I. I wish to produce another most evident argument in confirmation of what I said at the very beginning, namely that this *Dissertation* is nothing other than a very dense thicket, within which Probabilism stands lost in the woods, covered on every side. Only when it comes forth in order to direct or explain some practical and perceptible truth does it immediately make itself known. In part X, chapter 5, two propositions condemned by Innocent XI are explained at length. I would form a large volume if I wished to call to thorough examination all the subtle speculations invented there. But in order not to confuse the Reader, and to render him perceptibly persuaded of the falsity of Probabilism, I shall transcribe the final and forceful answer by which it is pretended to prove that the obligation of the lay Judge in deciding temporal lawsuits is different and greater than that of the spiritual Judge who decides the lawsuits of the soul. Thus, then, our Author writes on page 244.

II. *It remains lastly to see whether the incomparable preeminence which the spiritual interests of the soul have over the temporal and fleeting interests of the present life convinces us that the Confessor ought to impose the aforesaid obligation upon the Penitent, he being constrained to this by a greater reason than that by which the Judge is bound not to pronounce sentence except according to the opinion which in civil law he judges to be the more probable. Now, since this argument is founded entirely upon the interest of salvation, in order that it conclude, it is necessary to say that the Confessor, by permitting Penitents to accommodate themselves to an opinion which he regards as less probable, thereby causes some harm to their eternal salvation; whence the argument by comparison with the Judge is formed in this manner. In civil causes, in which only the temporal interest of the litigating parties is at issue, one of whom by the sentence of the Judge loses, for example, the inheritance, and loses the inheritance which is really his if by chance the opinion according to which the Judge sentences is false, the Judge, in order to avoid as much as he can the danger of such harm, must judge according to the opinion which, after having used due diligence, he esteems to be the more Probable. Therefore, for a much greater reason, the Confessor can never permit the Penitent the use of the probable opinion which asserts that something is lawful unless he regards it as more probable; since if such an opinion is by chance false, the Penitent, by following it, falls into sin and loses grace together with the right to eternal happiness, a loss which beyond every comparison is greater than the loss of any earthly inheritance. But this argument, as everyone immediately sees, confuses material sin with formal sin and leads directly to rigid Tutiorism. Therefore it must be resolved even by the Probabiliorists. Wherefore we shall add no other answer, so as not to repeat with tedium the things already said.*

III. This is another most evident demonstration that the cause of Probabilism is openly false. If the Reverend Father Bovio, endowed with talent and knowledge and armed with all the subtlest and sharpest Probabilistic weapons, has not known how to find the appearance of a sufficient answer to the argument which he himself proposes on behalf of the Antiprobabilists, reason convinces us that the argument admits no answer. Wherefore, if the answer given by the Reverend Father Bovio succumbs, this must be ascribed only to the condition of the bad cause. Let us examine the answer. *But this argument, as everyone immediately sees, confuses material sin with formal sin and leads directly to rigid*

Tutiorism. But why ever, Reverend Father, in the first part of the argument, in which the Judge is spoken of, is material sin not confused with formal sin? And in the second part, in which the Confessor is spoken of, is the material confused with the formal? We have asked this why many times. Why, Reverend Father, does obliging the Judge to pronounce sentence according to the more probable not lead directly to rigid Tutiorism, while obliging the Confessor to judge according to the more probable leads directly to rigid Tutiorism? Here the disparity has been asked for, and it has never been given, nor will it ever be given, because there is none. To introduce here rigid Tutiorism and the distinction between material and formal sin is the same as to introduce Crayfish with the Moon and the Bell Tower with the Week. The Gentlemen Probabilists complain when we deride their capricious distinctions applied at whim in order to preserve their beloved Probabilism. When they do not know what to answer, they immediately have recourse to the distinction between material sin and formal sin; they oppose, whether right side up or upside down, a little Tutiorism. These are the commonplaces from which, in the most difficult cases, they take their final weapons of defense. Unjustly, therefore, do they complain if we often say that at whim they go about forming certain phantoms of imaginary Tutiorism in order to confuse it with the real Tutiorism condemned by Holy Church. It therefore remains evidently demonstrated that, just as the Judge is obliged to pronounce sentence according to the more probable, so the Confessor must judge according to the more probable; and if obliging the Judge to the greater probability does not lead to Tutiorism nor confuse material sin with formal sin, the same must be said of the Confessor, without its being possible to find the least disparity.

IV. I could examine very many other points of the *Theological Dissertation*; but since I have protested that I do not wish to assume this engagement, both because the *Dissertation* is not against the *History of Probabilism*, and because nothing is said in it which has not already been refuted a thousand times, I therefore dispense myself from it. From these very few things indicated in passing, everyone will understand ever more clearly what sort of Cause the Cause of Probabilism is.

§ V — In Defending Their Probabilism, the Modern Probabilists Show That They Wish to Know Nothing Either of Truth or of Merit for Paradise

§ V

IN DEFENDING THEIR PROBABILISM, THE MODERN PROBABILISTS SHOW THAT THEY WISH TO KNOW NOTHING EITHER OF TRUTH OR OF MERIT FOR PARADISE. THEY FRANKLY ABSTRACT FROM THESE TWO POINTS, TOWARD WHICH, BY GOD'S COMMAND, OUR KNOWLEDGE AND ACTIONS MUST BE DIRECTED. THIS ALONE MUST SUFFICE FOR THE CATHOLIC WORLD TO KNOW OF WHAT ALLOY PROBABILISM IS.

I. All the valiant Men of Letters who until now have blunted their pens in order to combat the *History of Probabilism* have abandoned the doctrine of their Forebears. The Reverend Fathers Ghezzi and Lecchi, seeing how horrid and monstrous is the portrait of Probabilism represented in the aforesaid *History*, write that two Probabilisms must be distinguished: one perverse and monstrous, such as that which Father Concina depicts; the other beautiful, pleasing, comely, benign, and innocent. But it is an undeniable fact that the Probabilism represented by Father Concina is the very same one taught by Vazquez, Terill, Moya, Sanchez, La Croix, Viva, Segneri, and the other Probabilists, and by the same Fathers Lecchi, Ghezzi, and Bovio. To the proofs. We have already seen that Father Ghezzi in clear terms establishes as a fundamental principle in the idea which he gives of Probabilism that *to the good Probabilist it matters nothing that the less probable opinion can be directly affirmed to be true; it suffices that it can be affirmed to be truly probable*. But let Your Reverence be assured that, according to all those who possess the light of reason, a proposition which is not true will never be truly probable, but will be probable only in appearance. Can a Probabilism more monstrous be imagined than one which by its nature and according to its essential notion abstracts from truth? Probabiliorism, on the contrary, by its nature goes in search of truth and commonly finds it, as all the Wise teach, and only accidentally and in some case can strike against error.

II. To this monstrous principle Father Bovio adds another necessarily connected with it, and it is that the Probabilistic system does not guide Christians along the way of merit which leads to Paradise, but only seeks to avoid formal sin which drives one to Hell. He advises his Readers that the question of merit is different and separate from the question of the lawful. The Paradox appears incredible, and therefore here is the title of his chapter 5, page 21: *It is observed in the present question that we dispute only whether the use of probable opinions is PERMITTED, and therefore immune from fault. Hence our question is separated from another question, in which it is asked whether a man merits by that which he judges good and holy with a judgment free from fault, when it happens that the action which he believes good through invincible ignorance is in itself evil*. This is the title of the Chapter. In order to understand well how stupendous this doctrine is, observe the final two words: *through invincible ignorance*. For fifteen centuries the whole human race has understood invincible ignorance to be that which cannot be overcome. The Gentlemen Probabilists have invented an invincible ignorance which refuses the greater direct light, which positively closes its eyes to the greater probability, which monstrous ignorance is placed in its true light in the *Appendix* to volume I of the *History of Probabilism*. Let us now restrict our reasoning to the singular doctrine of Fathers Bovio, Lecchi, and Ghezzi, who, overcome by the arguments with which the Probabilism taught by their first and principal Masters, Vazquez, Terill, Moya, Arriaga, Casnedi, La Croix, Segneri, Viva, and others commonly, has been rendered horrid, have departed

from them. These always taught that their Probabilism is a good guide for directing souls to Heaven. Let us transcribe once again the general Rule of the Reverend Father Antonio Casnedi, also a Milanese, who printed five folio Volumes in defense of Probabilism, which form a Probabilistic Library of what Vazquez, Terill, Moya, and so many other distinguished Probabilists have written: *Since You are the Master of truth, You condescend so far to human weakness that in Your Tribunal of truth blameless error is made EQUAL to truth itself. For You do not accuse it, but excuse it; You do not punish it, but reward it; regarding Your own law as no law, and that which is not Your law as law, if the Law is invincibly proposed as no Law, and no Law as Law.* All the Jesuit Probabilists whom I have read teach substantially the same doctrine. The others add an *accidentally* in order to render adulteries, lies, and perjuries deserving of Paradise when through Probabilistic ignorance they are invincibly represented as good and lawful. Let Father Bovio produce for me a single French Jesuit Probabilist who has denied the doctrine of Casnedi, Terill, and La Croix upon this point. Therefore the three Milanese Jesuit Theologians Ghezzi, Lecchi, and Bovio have abandoned the Probabilism of their ancestors and have fallen into a worse one. Probabilistic doctrine is a general Rule which, according to the Probabilists, encompasses almost all Moral Theology, except for certain particular matters in which Probabilism is condemned. By this Probabilistic doctrine Christianity is regulated. And then it is taught that this doctrine seeks only to avoid formal sin which drives one to Hell, while it regards leading souls along the way of merit as something separate? The less verisimilar opinion is commonly the false one, just as the more Probable is commonly the true one. Falsity and merit cannot be united together. For every merit is from God, whereas no falsehood can derive from that God who is Truth itself. In order to escape from this reef, the Reverend Fathers Lecchi, Ghezzi, and Bovio have struck against the other rock of creating a new Limbo for the souls directed by Probabilism. Nor let it be said that this is to make the Probabilistic doctrine ridiculous. For according to you Probabilism suffices to avoid formal sin, and consequently Hell. On the other hand, you do not dare to assert that he who acts according to Probabilism merits Paradise. Therefore it is evident that a new Limbo is required for the souls directed by Probabilism.

III. Nor can recourse be had to the stale retortion that even the more probable opinion is not prevented from being false, in which case not even the Probabiliorist merits Paradise, while nevertheless he avoids Hell. For from what has been said the vanity of the sophism disappears. The more probable opinion is commonly the true one, and therefore, the other conditions being supposed, the Probabiliorist commonly walks along the way of merit which leads to eternal glory; nor does the mistake of some step which might occur in some rare case make him stray from his common ordinary path. On the contrary, the less verisimilar opinion, less near to truth, is by its nature commonly false. Therefore the soul directed by the Probabilistic guide is commonly outside the road of the merit of eternal life, for the reason already given, that merit and falsity cannot be joined together. Nor does the accidental encounter with truth in some rare case suffice to restore it and set it upon the way of merit, since the refusal of the greater Probability renders imprudent that very discovery of truth which might occur in some rare event. Elsewhere this doctrine has already been set forth in all its light and vindicated from all cavillations. In order that the Reverend Father Bovio may know that, in abandoning the doctrine of his Forebears and principal Theologians, he has fallen into a worse extreme, let us suppose, in order to render the thing perceptible and intelligible even to Father Lecchi's Lord Count, that Father Ghezzi's Lord Abbot begins to converse in this manner with the Reverend Father Bovio.

IV. You, Reverend Father Bovio, with a strong and resolute spirit, have abandoned your residence in Milan, interrupted the Apostolic Ministry of hearing confessions, preaching, and other Spiritual exercises, in order to undertake a long and disastrous journey; in order to go into the Cantons of the Swiss, to Einsidlen, to print against Friar Concina, in defense of your beloved Probabilism, two volumes: your own and that of your Associate, Father Lecchi. The hardships and sufferings of the journey and the long stay there have caused you no small inconvenience. It is true that the stay was made more comfortable within that vast, grand Benedictine Monastery, in which His Highness the Lord Prince Abbot showed you all those courtesies and generous acts of munificence which were merited by your person and by the recommendations written there for your benefit by him whom you and I know. But with all these Princely treatments it cannot be denied that you suffered inconveniences, disturbances, and labors. The sum of the money spent, not upon the splendid treatment which they say was provided to you gratuitously by the Lord Prince Abbot, but upon the printings, was not small, at least in itself. For they say that you had two or three thousand copies struck off; and from the numerous gifts of such Books which you distribute even to those who do not want them, the great number of copies printed is gathered. It is also said that a Latin version of the two volumes is being made for the benefit of the Germans who love the new Probabilism. They say in addition that you have kindled the Zeal even of those Monks against Friar Concina, almost as against the common Enemy of the Regulars, because he wrote against the voluntary and immoderate Monastic Peculium much more mildly than the great Abbot Trithemius.

V. This being supposed, Father Ghezzi's Lord Abbot, the interlocutor, thus resumes his discourse. You, Reverend Father, have left the Apostolic Ministry, undertaken a disastrous and costly journey, suffered hardships, spent thousands of philipps, and consumed so much time. Why? To refute the *History* of Friar Concina? To defend that Probabilism which you do not dare to confess as a Rule of merit? To expend so rich a capital of sufferings, inconveniences, and money without any merit for eternal life? For a Probabilism of this sort, so many expenses, so many disturbances? In order to battle with Friar Concina, so many commotions, so many clamors, so many journeys? In your cited chapter, page 25, you write that the present question concerning the lawful use of Probable Opinions is very different from the question whether he who acts under the guidance of the opinion less near to truth, and consequently ordinarily false, merits Paradise. Believe me, Your Reverence, that when the World has well understood this Probabilism of yours, it will detest it of itself. I do not wish to discourse any longer upon this delightful *Dissertation* of yours; just as I also declare that I wish neither to abuse the time nor the patience of the Readers in refuting those Writings which might appear either against the *History of Probabilism*, or its defenses, or against another similar Work; those Writings, I say, which, containing nothing solid and capable of illuminating the matters, serve for nothing else than to vent the spirit of party and to obscure truths already rendered evident by the force of reasons and by the Decrees of the Holy Roman See.

Final Chapter — Important Reflection upon All the Books of the Adversaries against Friar Concina

FINAL CHAPTER
IMPORTANT REFLECTION
UPON ALL THE BOOKS OF THE ADVERSARIES AGAINST FRIAR CONCINA
FOR THE DISABUSING OF THEIR INTERLOCUTORS

I. You, Gentlemen Counts and Marquises, interlocutors of the Reverend Fathers Ghezzi and Lecchi, have for a long time been entertained now at the bank of the Mississippi compared with the Holy Morality of the Gospel, now on a journey with the Patriarch Abraham disguised as a Merchant; and you, Ladies and Abbots, now at the dinner in Milan, now at the parlor with the Abbesses, now at country retreats at the table spread with Sturgeon in the evening collation of the Ecclesiastical Fast, have heard very long discourses upon Probabilism, upon Tutiorism, upon Rigorism. Now hear a brief discourse for your disabusing. Thus far I have often shown you the paralogisms, the sophisms, and the false facts of your two Theologians. In this final one I wish to authenticate all my answers with public and manifest facts.

II. The most dazzling entrenchment with which the Reverend Fathers Ghezzi, Bovio, Lecchi, and Sanvitale cover the horror of Probabilism is this. *We*, they say, *defend nothing except a solid, grave, and certain Probability: a probability which is solid and grave in comparison with another that is greater.* Now a probability of this kind is only that which is supported by robust reasons and by the grave authority of Theologians respectable for number, learning, and probity. Within the entrenchment of these specious words, of these luminous epithets, they defend their Probabilism. Now I wish to show you that in practice all these modifications and restrictions are evidently false. This is a truth of fact which cannot be proved in a better form than by facts. Now, among the innumerable facts which I could adduce, I shall restrict myself to one alone.

III. The whole World knows Father Benzi's opinions concerning Blasphemies through habit and Mammillary Touches. These two opinions, that blasphemies through habit do not contain a distinct and singular malice, and that pinching the cheeks and touching the breasts of Nuns are not a grave fault, were defended not only by Father Benzi before the Holy Office condemned them - which defense could justly be called innocent - but were defended even after the manifest condemnation of the Holy Office. The two *Salutary Notices* of Father Faure and Father Castellini, printed and reprinted in defense of such propositions, are known to the whole World. The *Judgment*, or opinion, of Father T. is likewise printed and is being distributed as a masterpiece. The fact cannot be called into doubt. I ask: Can these two opinions be called solidly probable, gravely probable? Can they be said to be supported by solid reasons, by firm foundations? Are they sustained by grave, learned, holy, and numerous Authors? The Reverend Fathers Ghezzi, Lecchi, Benzi, Faure, Castellini, with all their adherents, will answer yes indeed. And you, Gentlemen Counts and Marquises, what do you answer? Is it not true that, according to that natural light spread by God upon the face of your souls, you reprove such opinions as scandalous and repugnant to the Christian profession? Is it not true that you now touch with your hand how monstrous that Probabilism really is which your directing Theologians depict to you with innocent colors? It is therefore evident that Probabilism dresses itself

according to fashion and adorns itself in its general notions with clauses, appendices, and limitations which are not observed in practice in the least or at all.

IV. By way of example, it is boasted that in the matter of lust there is no parvity of matter. The purity of such Rules is ascribed to the glory of one's own school. But with this general idea of good doctrine is joined the practice of the laxest opinions. The words are changed, and the meanings are altered. Lust is no longer lust; impurity is no longer impurity. Obscene acts are called sub-obscene, and immodest actions are called sub-immodest. Let it be denied that there is parvity of matter in the class of impurity. But in order that Probabilism not remain prejudiced in the breadth of its benignity and condescension, let it be denied that *to pinch the cheeks and touch the breasts of Nuns* is grave impurity. Nor can it be answered that these are the opinions of a single private person who does not prejudice the system. For how many Booklets and Libels have been seen to issue into the light in defense of the said opinions even after their condemnation? There has been seen a commitment, I shall not say universal, but of very many. You, Gentlemen Counts and Countesses, Gentlemen Marquises and Abbots, are you not perhaps eyewitnesses of these events? Do you not perchance see the fine custom which flourishes among you under the guidance of Probabilism? Who better than you knows what occurs in your promiscuous gatherings, courtships, games, scenes, banquets, and theaters? And who, finally, better than you can attest your frequency of Confessions and Communions?

Behold, O Gentlemen Counts, Marquises, Ladies, and Abbots, your true disabusing. Compare the conduct of your life, not with the Books of the Reverend Fathers Ghezzi, Lecchi, Bovio, Benzi, Faure, Tamburini, and the like, but with the Books of Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul. Do not allow dust to be thrown into your eyes by those who pass off as Rigorism and fatal Tutiorism the severe and most austere Morality of the Gospel, repugnant to the flesh, the senses, and the appetites: a Morality hard and exceedingly harsh to the human passions, but gentle and exceedingly sweet beneath the Divine unction of Charity. However much your Theologians may seek to rouge for you the deformity of Probabilism, they will never be able to conduct you to Paradise by any other way than the narrow and constricted one, filled with crosses, repugnances, penances, fasts, alms, and continual mortifications of your own passions. To this is reduced the whole substance of Christian Morality.

THE END

Addition: Brief Observations upon the Extract the Fathers of Trévoux Made from Father Millante's Vindiciae Regularium

ADDITION
OF SOME BRIEF OBSERVATIONS
UPON
The Extract which the Reverend Fathers of Trévoux have made from Father Millante's Book entitled *Vindiciae Regularium*, etc.

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January 1744
Pesaro, at the Printing House of Niccolò Gavelli, 1745

At the time when I was writing the preceding Reflections upon Father Lecchi's *Warnings*, the *Memoirs of Trévoux* for January 1744, translated into our language and printed in Pesaro, came into my hands. Having read the first article, containing the Extract from Father Millante's Book upon Monastic Poverty, I judged it well to submit to public judgment a few brief observations upon the said Extract. And first I observe the favorable disposition of those Reverend Fathers toward the Italian Nation; for, passing over so many excellent Writers abounding in erudition and doctrine, they have given in compendium a little Book of Father Millante upon Monastic Poverty which, with respect both to the solidity of its propositions and to its method of writing, is an object of compassion among all men of understanding. But every wonder will cease when it is reflected that the first and sole purpose of this Extract is to represent two Dominicans fighting each other upon the field, in order to render them both material for the entertainment of the common people; and to bring the benign opinions into vogue, and into discredit those judgments which they call rigorous and which are incontestable truths. I shall report a few texts of the Extract with some observations of my own, so that everyone may judge whether what I have proposed is true.

Page 6. In order to show *the bounds of a great moderation within which Father Millante has confined himself in refuting the most audacious work of the Apostolic-Monastic Discipline*, they transcribe in fine italic type some of his bombastic expressions, by which he boasts of being furnished with the art of fine speaking. *It is not that he cannot easily make his Adversary feel the sting of his pen, intermingle in his reply jokes and jests which would divert the Readers, or imagine vigorous sayings and figures, which would not be lacking to him, since Father Millante too has the talent of preaching.* In an Extract in which the substantial essence of the principal points contained in the Book is offered, it was necessary to display this humble vaunting of the Neapolitan Writer.

Page 7. *These two sons of one and the same Mother* (write the Reverend Fathers of Trévoux), *whom zeal for truth arms one against the other; and since the question concerns a principal point of Religious perfection, it may be said that this is a Civil and Religious war.* The war is neither civil nor Religious; indeed, it is not a war, but a dispute directed toward the discovery of that truth which is the true source of peace and concord.

The Reverend Fathers of Trévoux consume several pages in representing that Monastic Poverty ought not to be called Apostolic, that is, derived from the Apostles, as the Preacher of Venice explains. Thus they call the Author of the *Monastic Discipline*. They describe Father Millante's conceited thoughts against this Apostolic-Monastic Poverty, knowing well that Calvin alone, with his followers, denies that Monastic Vows have their origin from the Holy Apostles, calling Monastic Poverty a human invention.

Page 11. *The question will be to resolve precisely what may be inferred from the obligations of individuals concerning the obligations of the Community; and, conversely, if the controversy takes this turn, without doubt the Dominican Professor of Theology will put the Preacher of Venice in a bad position, although he knows much Latin.* Those Reverend Fathers act not only as Journalists, but as Prophets. In the future conflict of the Theologian with the Preacher they predict victory for the Theologian with certainty. Perhaps before much time has passed it will be seen how certain their prophecy is.

Page 15. *What we have said until now is only a preamble. Nothing else has been done, that is, than to repress the harshness of the Title of the Work.* The whole Extract is twenty pages long. Fifteen of them have been employed upon the title page alone. The *harshness* with which Monastic Poverty was qualified as *Apostolic* and *Evangelical* has been so intolerable to the pious and learned Journalists of Trévoux that, in order to soften it and make the Preacher of Venice appear a Rigorist, they judged it worth the effort to occupy more than a third part of their Extract.

Page 16. *Who does not know*, Father Millante continues to say, according to the interpretation of the Reverend Fathers of Trévoux, *that a Religious applied to study needs many Books, which indeed there is an even greater obligation to provide for him, so that he may acquit himself decorously in some distinguished function? This is wholly useless to another idle and ignorant Religious. Who will wish to deny that it is fitting to permit to a studious and diligent Religious the use of CHOCOLATE, and of some other refreshment, of which those who do not labor have no need?* It would have been astonishing if these Reverend Fathers, compiling a treatise upon the principal foundation of Evangelical perfection, had not sweetened their Extract with the most flavorful beverage of Chocolate. But in order to comprehend well the gravity, solidity, and piety which shine in their Extract, let us recite their own singular judgment which they pronounce upon the Chocolate and Peculium to be permitted to Mendicant Religious.

Page 17. *He, Father Millante, examines to which Religious a peculium may be permitted, and declares that a Professor of Theology in a University needs many Books, and more comforts both for food and for lodging, in order to preserve himself under his great and continual labors, which is by no means necessary to the remainder of the Community, which is outside so laborious an occupation.* Now hear the sententious, grave, pious, and prudent judgment of the Reverend Fathers. *We are displeased that Father Millante always places the Theologians in view and wishes in some manner to exclude the Preachers from all those little alleviations with which usage favors us. It was necessary to grant them to them also, and then they too will speak for the GOOD CAUSE. The Preacher of Venice, etc.*

Thus, Reverend Fathers, the use of the most flavorful Chocolate for Mendicant Regulars, and the use of the Peculium, is that *good cause* for which not only the Theologians, but also the Preachers from the pulpit, will take an interest? You are displeased that Father Millante grants both the Peculium and the Chocolate to the Theologians alone, and does not permit it equally to Preachers; you ought to have added Schoolmasters, Missionaries, and Journalists, because then *they too will speak for the good cause*. For about thirty years this good cause has introduced, both in Cloisters and in Colleges, fixed

annuities, or pensions, now of fifteen, now of thirty, now of fifty, now of one hundred scudi annually, in order to provide these Professors of *Evangelical Apostolic Poverty* daily with that sweetest beverage. This is the *good cause* in which, say the Reverend Fathers of Trévoux, all those to whom it is granted will take an interest. What fine entertainment such Extracts offer to the Dutch and to all Protestants, who, on seeing Evangelical Poverty written of in a manner more suited to the Theatrical stage than to the Christian Chair, remain all the more obstinate in their errors and become more audacious in bringing the holy Monastic Vows into derision. What sort of Poverty is this, they say, which permits to its Professors those exquisite and costly delicacies which so many and so many could not taste if they found themselves in the secular world without that holy Vow?

Page 19. *We have professed neither the one nor the other of these two Rules* (of Saint Augustine and Saint Benedict); *therefore we shall not fall under suspicion of partiality, at least on this occasion. Father Millante, an old Professor of Theology, is not a man to be frightened by the amplification and noise of his Adversary.* It is most true, Reverend Fathers. On this occasion you are very far from every suspicion of partiality, because you show yourselves most committed to rendering both Dominicans equally the subject of a comedy. You show yourselves partial only to the doctrine which supports the *good cause* of permitting to Mendicant Regulars, among whose number you also are, the exquisite beverage of Chocolate and other delicious refreshments. You have professed neither the one nor the other Rule of Saint Augustine or Saint Benedict; but you have nevertheless professed a Poverty much more rigorous than that prescribed in those two Rules. How the praises which you give to the lax opinions favorable to the peculium can be reconciled with the profession of your Poverty will be matter for another disputation.

Page 22. *We would desire that Father Millante had reported exactly and word for word the definition of his Adversary. But this is perhaps not his fault. We suspect that the Preacher, following the spirit of his profession, in which much more is made of speaking than of defining, will perhaps have immersed the definition in an abundance of expressions.* Here is a decisive argument for the impartiality of the Reverend Fathers. The Preacher of Venice does not know how to form a precise definition, because he is a Preacher.

Page 22. *Religious poverty is a free and voluntary abdication of all dominion over temporal goods. It moreover forbids the usufruct of things over which one has no dominion, if the Superior does not permit it.* Therefore can the Superior permit dominion to his Regular Subjects? This is no longer the Preacher of Venice who defines, but either the old Theologian or the Reverend Fathers of Trévoux who report this fine little doctrine.

Page 26. *These objections* (of the Third and Fourth Lateran Councils), *capable of frightening however many Religious there are in the World, do not in the least intimidate Father Millante, who judges them weak and frivolous, spineless ... and made of straw.* Here the Reverend Father Journalists make sport of the old Theologian, so as not to show themselves too adverse to the Preacher of Venice.

Page 33. *It cannot be denied that these regulations of the* Council (of Trent) *for the reform of the Regulars constitute one of the most specious objections.* You have heard the respect and deference with which the Journalist Fathers speak of the Tridentine Decrees.

If the Regulations of the Council of Trent constitute *specious* objections, that is, apparent and dazzling ones, the Decrees of this Holy Ecumenical Council will be dazzling appearances and specious Canons. But let us continue the text of the Reverend Fathers. *Young Theologians, with all the subtleties*

learned by them upon the benches in the ordinary course of studies, would find themselves entangled therein. But an old Professor, and one of consummate learning, always has good resources.... Father Millante replies, etc. I am persuaded that the whole world is now convinced that these Reverend Fathers made this Extract, as I said at the very beginning, in order to make sport of both Dominicans, to make first one and then the other play the character in a comedy, and to inflame one still more against the other. But on this occasion the Reverend Father Journalists have opposed themselves badly. They alone have exposed themselves to the most just censures for having displayed, under a Theatrical presentation, the doctrine of Evangelical Poverty. The two Dominicans have written what each one believed true, and will continue to write in the future, for the greater glory of God, against lax and scandalous opinions. Father Millante's doctrine, given in compendium by the learned Father Journalists, is capable of scandalizing anyone who has knowledge of Religious Poverty. Hence it is that we were not induced to make these brief observations because two Dominicans were made the objects of mockery by the Reverend Father Journalists; for many years they have been accustomed to tolerating the calumnies of others of their Confreres. The motive which has impelled us to write a few lines is seeing holy Evangelical Poverty, which the Regulars promise to God with a solemn Vow, represented under a ridiculous aspect and overflowing with delicacies and peculia. And what has surprised us still more is that the Reverend Father Journalists not only make a solemn Vow of Evangelical Poverty, not only profess the exact Community described in the Monastic Rules, but in addition make a special Vow never to relax that poverty and community which the Holy Patriarch Ignatius established in his illustrious Society.

Now I cannot comprehend how those Reverend Father Journalists know how to reconcile with the poverty which they profess together with the other Regulars the opinions of Father Millante, which are among the laxest in this class. Let the Reverend Fathers read their most benign Probabilists, Sánchez, Castro Palao, and Lessius, and they will find that the doctrine of these is substantially the same as that of the Author of the *Dissertations*. Nor can they excuse themselves under the pretext that they act as reporters, reducing to a compendium the doctrines of the Books which they review. This excuse may be valid when Books of Physics, Metaphysics, Geometry, Astrology, and the like are reviewed; but to put into the vernacular language lax and certainly false opinions in matters of morals, such as those summarized by the Reverend Father Journalists, cannot in any respect pass as a just thing, not even among Journalists. O what times! Usuries are no longer usuries. Evangelical Poverty, professed by Priests consecrated with solemn Vows to the Majesty of the great God, has become splendid and nourishes itself upon the most exquisite delicacies. It admits the use of money and of the most flavorful foods and beverages. It renounces to the Monastery only bare and sterile dominion. Not dominion, but the use of the woman; not dominion, but the use of money; not dominion, but the use of Chocolate satisfy lust, cupidity, and the palate. The Reverend Father Journalists have believed themselves to confer a great benefit upon the public by promoting in their Journals that fine Casuistic doctrine which, by the sole distinction of use from dominion, makes the Professors of Evangelical Poverty live sumptuously.

And Father Millante believed that he would acquire great credit by having these Reverend Fathers entreated, as I am told, to review this miserable little Book of his in their Journals. But I hope that he will soon perceive how much better he would have done to heed the wise counsel of that learned Dominican who exhorted him not to publish so scandalous a doctrine. Although I am not surprised that Father Millante printed his little Book, I do indeed marvel

that the Reverend Jesuit Fathers of Trévoux were capable of putting so pernicious a doctrine into the vernacular language, to the injury of Regular discipline. But it is necessary to excuse these also, upon the reflection that they had to unite themselves with their Confreres Lecchi and Sanvitale, who had committed themselves to exalting the Book of Father Millante and Carratino, to the fatal prejudice of Monastic Poverty. In due time the truth will be brought to light.

THE END