CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE ARGUMENTS PUT FORWARD
BY LOUVAIN AND DOUAI SCHOLARS IN CENSURING
THE PROPOSITIONS OF THE LOUVAIN JESUITS
CONCERNING SCRIPTURAL INSPIRATION.
ONE LEARNED PARIS THEOLOGIAN’S HIGHLY
INDEPENDENT VIEW OF THE MATTER

As I have no further documents published by the Jesuit fathers of Louvain in support of their propositions concerning scriptural inspiration, apart from what I have already produced, I shall attempt to compensate for this by examining the arguments employed in the censure published by the Louvain and Douai faculties of theology. I should like to think that the theologians’ sole motive was to defend truth, that is, that their archaic opinions and personal animus had no part in this entire quarrel. As to the Jesuits, it would appear they put forward these views in their Flanders colleges strictly in line with the freedom granted to their instructors never to enter lightly upon the defence of opinions. However ancient, that appeared indefensible. In short, the Jesuits claimed not to follow slavishly the guiding opinions of their teachers. Such a practice being so eminently sensible, it is wrong to accuse them of questioning received opinions having no authority in most Schools when those opinions have no solid basis: this is actually what happened to them in the matter under discussion.

As one of their basic arguments for their censure, the Louvain theologians state that the Jesuits’ three propositions are identical to an early standpoint that was condemned among the Anomoeans and recorded by Saint Epiphanius: but one has only to check Saint Epiphanius’s text to see that the argument is baseless. He says that the Anomoeans blasphemed against the prophets and the apostles and when pressed strongly they fudged the difficulty by saying that the apostle spoke in a human capacity. Is there anything like this in the three propositions discussed above? Did the Jesuits of the Louvain college suggest that the writings of the apostles contained

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1 Epiphanius, Heresy 76 n. 54 (Panarion, 2:566).
false things on the grounds that they were speaking as human beings? Such was however the view of the Anomoeans who could not counter the arguments put to them which were taken from the books of the New Testament, and said that the writers of those books had spoken as, and only as, human beings in those passages.

The same response applies to the argument doctors based on the preface to Saint Jerome's commentaries on Paul's Epistle to Philemon. Here Jerome mentions heretics who rejected the Epistle on the grounds that the Holy apostle was not guided by the spirit of God when writing it. But even if one conceded to the heretics that Saint Paul and the other apostles were not inspired in everything that they wrote, it does not follow that some of their writings should be excluded: one has only to observe, as did the Jesuits of Louvain: that even passages that were not inspired contained nothing that is not true. They were given to us as such by the Holy Spirit.

The Amonoean sectarians inquired of the orthodox whether Saint Paul needed to be inspired in order to say (2 Timothy 4:13): “When you come bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books,” and other statements of this kind. I admit that there was no need for God to dictate things of this kind to Saint Paul or other sacred writers. This same view is held by the Louvain Jesuits and was subsequently confirmed in the same passage by Cornelius a Lapide whose words are quoted above; but they do not infer from this that the only portions of Scripture to be accepted are those dictated by the Holy Spirit. It suffices to believe that the sacred writers were guided by the Spirit of God in everything they wrote so that they would not make mistakes.

The Louvain theologians also criticised the Jesuits for reviving a standpoint condemned in the person of Erasmus. But it is easily shown that nothing they suggested resembled in the slightest what was said by Erasmus. He was accused of believing that in the writings of the apostles there were mistakes attributable to lapses of memory. Nothing along such lines is to be found in the three propositions of the Louvain Jesuits who, believing that the sacred writers were in no need of inspiration to record or to set down things that they knew, were not thus led to claim that those writers sometimes made mistakes because of a bad memory. Erasmus in one of his Apologies actually makes every effort to disprove the accusation, protesting that he had merely reproduced what Saint Jerome had said in that regard.

\[3\] Jerome, ibid., citing 2 Timothy 4:13 (PL 26:601).