ON PENANCE (DE POENITENTIA)

Emmanuel Doronzo, O.M.I.

Volume I: On the Sacrament and the Virtue

1949
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Volume I: On the Sacrament and the Virtue

Volume I: Title Page

D O G M A T I C T R E A T I S E

ON PENANCE

VOLUME I

ON THE SACRAMENT AND THE VIRTUE

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Originally published by The Bruce Publishing Company

Milwaukee · 1949

Approbations and Dedication

ECCLESIASTICAL APPROBATIONS

Permission to print: Stanislas Larochelle, O.M.I., Provincial Superior.

Nihil obstat: Joseph C. Fenton, Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur: John M. McNamara, D.D., Titular Bishop of Eumenia and ✠ Administrator of the Archdiocese of Baltimore and Washington.

September 5, 1947.

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IN MEMORY OF

RODERIC CARDINAL VILLENEUVE, O.M.I.

"A second plank after shipwreck."

—St. Jerome, Epistle 130, 9

"A laborious Baptism."

—Council of Trent, Session XIV, chapter 2

Letter from the Secretariat of State of His Holiness

LETTER FROM THE SECRETARIAT OF STATE OF HIS HOLINESS

From the Vatican, March 4, 1948.

Most Reverend Father,

From the gift you presented to the Supreme Pontiff of your volume entitled On the Eucharist, he has perceived with what eager and devout study you cultivate and expound the doctrine of Catholic dogma.

His Holiness, offering you his most abundant thanks for having shown, in such a manner and in a fitting way, this duty of devotion and reverence toward the Apostolic See, congratulates you upon the work you have accomplished, which is lacking neither in soundness of doctrine, nor in subtlety of exposition, nor in elegance of expression.

As a pledge of divine gifts, receive the Apostolic Blessing, which the Most Blessed Father lovingly imparts to you.

Meanwhile, with due respect, I profess myself

your most devoted servant,

J. B. MONTINI

Substitute

To the Very Reverend Father Emmanuel Doronzo, O.M.I., Professor at the Catholic University of Washington.

Preface, by Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.

PREFACE

With true joy I write this brief preface to the treatise On Penance, written by the Reverend Father Emmanuel Doronzo, O.M.I., who was my beloved pupil at Rome. He was an excellent student, for he fixed the gaze of his mind upon the higher principles. But since that time he has advanced greatly through teaching; and now, as is evident from the present volume, he is highly proficient in both positive and speculative theology, which he happily joins together, carefully considering their applications to practice.

This first part of the treatise On Penance manifests the same learning and penetration as the volumes previously published on the sacraments in general, on Baptism and Confirmation, and on the Eucharist, both as sacrament and as sacrifice. Following the method of positive theology, the author diligently treats Penance insofar as it concerns not only the efficacy of remitting sins, but also the proper and jurisdictional power of effecting that remission. He deals admirably with the truth, origin, character, and progressive interpretation of this power, against both conservative and, especially, liberal Protestants, who above all reject the social and authoritative character of the Church, particularly as manifested in the conferring and exercise of the power of the keys.

Father Emmanuel Doronzo neither separates nor merely juxtaposes the different parts of this treatise, namely, the virtue of penance, the sacrament of penance, and the power of the keys; rather, he rightly considers all these logically and formally under the notion of one sacrament, as St. Thomas does. Accordingly, he fittingly unites in one question both the institution of the sacrament and that of the power of the keys. The middle part of this volume concerns the virtue of penance itself, by way of

introduction to what will afterwards be said concerning the matter of the sacrament, which is wholly vivified by this virtue. For, as St. Thomas teaches, all three acts of the penitent are acts elicited by the supernatural virtue of penance. This is ordinarily set forth inadequately in modern works. Father Emmanuel Doronzo excellently investigates and determines the formal object of this virtue of penance and its essential supernatural character.

Thus this volume treats of Penance in a more general manner, both as a sacrament and as a virtue. In the second and third volumes there will be discussion of the matter and form of the sacrament, that is, of the three acts of the penitent and of absolution; in the fourth volume, of the extrinsic causes, namely, of the effect, the minister, the subject, the power of the keys, and indulgences.

The treatise on penance which St. Thomas wished to complete toward the end of his life was very extensive; likewise the present treatise. At its conclusion, however, I think Father Emmanuel Doronzo will provide, by way of recapitulation, a synthesis of all these matters which previously had to be considered analytically.

I wish the author abundant fruit from such great labour, accomplished with zeal for souls.

Fr. REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, O.P.

Angelicum, Rome March 7, 1948 Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas

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Introduction

ON THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

INTRODUCTION

"Penance is the fourth sacrament,"[1] in the order not of perfection or necessity, but of nature.[2]

[1] Council of Florence, *Decree for the Armenians*, Denzinger 699; cf. Council of Trent, session VII, canon 1, Denzinger 844.

[2] In the treatise *On the Sacraments in General*, art. 43, Penance is called the sixth sacrament in the order of perfection and dignity, but second (or third) in the order of necessity.

For three kinds of sacraments are enumerated:[3] one regards man individually and in himself (Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist); another regards man individually but accidentally (Penance and Extreme Unction); a third regards man socially (Holy Orders and Matrimony).

[3] Cf. the treatise *On the Sacraments in General*, art. 42.

For the perfection of the individual man, the first three sacraments would of themselves suffice, since by them the spiritual life is generated, increased, and brought to completion. But because, through the weakness of nature and the frailty of free will, it happens that man falls again into sin, which is a kind of spiritual sickness, the most merciful Saviour, wisely imitating nature herself, like the Good Samaritan, has applied sacramental remedies to spiritual wounds: namely, PENANCE, by which the health of grace is restored as though through a revival of BAPTISM; and EXTREME UNCTION, by which the former health is renewed as though through a revival of CONFIRMATION.

Introducing the treatment of this sacrament, the Master of the Sentences says:

> "After these things we must treat of Penance. Penance is necessary for those who have been placed far from God, that they may draw near to Him. It is, as Jerome says, the second plank after shipwreck: by it anyone who has corrupted through sin the garment of innocence received in Baptism can repair it through the remedy of Penance. The first plank is Baptism, in which the old man is put off and the new is put on; the second is Penance, by which after a fall we rise again, while the old condition that has returned is driven away and the newness that was lost is resumed."[4]

[4] Peter Lombard, *Sentences*, book IV, distinction 14, no. 1.

From this it is clear how important and excellent this sacrament is, and how worthy of consideration.

First, Penance yields to Baptism alone in the matter of necessity; hence it takes from that first sacrament the name of a second baptism and a second plank of salvation.

To the point, the Catechism of the Council of Trent, part II, chapter 5, question 1, says:

> "Just as the frailty and weakness of human nature are known to all, and each person easily experiences them in himself, so no one can be ignorant how necessary the sacrament of Penance is. ... This sacrament must be treated even more carefully than Baptism, since Baptism is administered only once and cannot be repeated; but there is occasion for Penance, and the necessity of repeating it is imposed, as often as it happens that one sins after Baptism. Thus the Council of Trent declared that the sacrament of Penance is no less necessary for salvation to those who have fallen after Baptism than Baptism is to those who have not yet been regenerated. That well-known saying of St. Jerome is therefore rightly approved by all who thereafter treated sacred matters: that Penance is the second plank after shipwreck. For just as, when a ship has been shattered, the sole remaining refuge for preserving life is to seize whatever plank may be had from the wreck, so, after the innocence of Baptism has been lost,

unless one flees to the plank of Penance, there is assuredly reason to despair of one's salvation."

Second, the usefulness of this sacrament is so great that "nearly all pious persons are persuaded that whatever of holiness, piety, and religion has in these times been preserved in the Church by the highest benefit of God is in great part to be attributed to confession; ... and [for this reason] the enemy of the human race, when he contemplated utterly overthrowing the Catholic faith, endeavoured by the ministers of his impiety and their accomplices to assault this as though it were the citadel of Christian virtue."[5]

[5] *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, part II, chapter 5, question 36.

Third, in this sacrament, as in the mystery of the Incarnation itself, which is the exemplar of all the sacraments, two supreme attributes of Divine Providence are wonderfully manifested, namely, Mercy and Justice, in which all the others are resolved, according to Psalm 24:10: "All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth."

For just as the mystery of redemption is accomplished in a first and universal act, as it were, through the concurrence of the merits of the Divinity and the humanity—the latter furnishing the Passion, the former adding infinite worth—so the mystery of spiritual healing is accomplished in a second and individual act through the concurrent actions of the merciful God and the penitent man. And just as the mystery of redemption is founded upon the mystery of the Incarnation, in which the two natures, divine and human, are united in the unity of one Person, so the mystery of spiritual healing is founded upon the peculiar character of this sacrament, in which (no less than in Matrimony) a human element is joined to a divine element in the one character of a practical sign of grace.[6]

[6] Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, question 84, article 1.

I. The Object of the Treatise

I. THE OBJECT OF THE TREATISE

Nominal definition.

This sacrament is designated by several names in Scripture and Tradition:

On the side of its form, it is called the sacrament of absolution (among the doctors of the Middle Ages).

On the side of its matter, it is called:

Confession, or confession of sins, or the sacrament of confession (this expression is already found among the doctors of the Middle Ages; cf. the Council of Verona, Denz. 402; Peter Damian, Sermons 58 and 69, M.L. 144, 834 and 901)[7]; these expressions are now commonly employed among the faithful. The word exomologesis (ἐξομολόγησις)[8], commonly used among the Greeks, both ancient and modern, has approximately the same meaning. It is also used by Tertullian (De Poenitentia, 9), Cyprian (De lapsis, 16), and probably already by Irenaeus (Against Heresies, I, 10, 1), to designate the whole external complex of penance.

[7] Sermon 69 is now attributed to Nicholas of Clairvaux (mid-twelfth century).

[8] Cf. Zorell, *Lexicon Graecum Novi Testamenti*.

Penance, or the sacrament of Penance. This expression, whose meaning will be explained below, began to be employed from the twelfth century and gradually became so common that it was consecrated in the very documents of the Church. Yet one or another of the older theologians ill-advisedly attacked it, wishing to substitute for it the designation "sacrament of remission."

Metanoia. This is a very frequent Greek expression; its meaning will be explained below.

Laborious Baptism (*baptismus laboriosus*; Gregory Nazianzen, Oration 39, 17; 40, 8). The reason for this expression is that in this sacrament, unlike in Baptism, confession and satisfaction are required, and consequently (or indirectly) a greater sorrow as well. To the point, the Council of Trent, session XIV, chapter 2, states: "Through Baptism ... we attain the full and complete remission of all sins; yet to this newness and integrity we can by no means attain through the sacrament of Penance without many tears and labours on our part, divine justice so requiring, so that Penance was rightly called by the holy Fathers a certain laborious Baptism" (Denz. 895). The Salmanticenses write: "More things ... than in Baptism occur in the sacrament of Penance, which are burdensome to human frailty: for the conscience must be examined; one must insist more earnestly upon hatred of sins on account of the greater deformity, at least of ingratitude, involved in a relapse committed after the benefit of Baptism; all sins must be disclosed to the priest, in kind and number, and in this there is no small shame and humiliation; and finally the work of satisfaction imposed must still be fulfilled. All these things ought to be performed more perfectly and more intensely, that we may be restored to that fullness of renewal which Baptism brought about without these hardships."[9]

[9] *On Penance*, disputation 7, doubt 1, § 6, no. 50 (Paris, 1883), p. 70 ff.

On the side of its *effect*, it is called:

The sacrament of reconciliation, or *reconciliation* (Gelasian Sacramentary, 38, M.L. 78, 1098).

The sacrament of remission (among the medieval doctors).

Laborious Baptism (as above), or *the laver of tears*.

Repeatable Baptism (Augustine).[10]

[10] Cf. the treatise *On Baptism and Confirmation*, pp. 356 and 361.

A second Baptism, or *a repeated generation* (Clement of Alexandria, *Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?*, 42).

A second plank after shipwreck. This is a celebrated and ancient expression, used significantly by the Council of Trent (session VI, chapter 14; session XIV, canon 2), the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* (as cited above, p. 2), St. Thomas (in the special article 6), Peter Lombard (*Sentences*, IV, distinction 14, cited above, p. 1), Jerome (Epistle 130, 9: "Let [Penance] be, as it were, a second plank after shipwreck for the wretched," M.L. 22, 1115), Ambrose (*On the Fall of a Consecrated Virgin*, 8, 38: "Cling [to Penance] as to a plank in shipwreck," M.L. 16, 395), and Tertullian (*On Penance*, 4: "Do you, a sinner, embrace it [that is, Penance] ... as a shipwrecked man embraces the security of some plank," M.L. 1, 1343; cf. chapter 12, ibid., 1360).

On the side of an *accidental ceremony*, it is called:

Discipline. This term alludes to penitential discipline, or the order of public penance.

Imposition of hands. This designation (sometimes expressed by the words "reconciliatory imposition," to distinguish it from the imposition of hands used in the sacraments of Holy Orders and Extreme Unction) alludes to the ceremony by which, down to the Middle Ages, absolution was imparted in both public and private penance. A vestige of it remains even now in the raising and extending of the priest's hand toward the penitent. To the point, Augustine, *On Baptism*, III, 16, says: "But the imposition of hands is not like Baptism, which cannot be repeated. For what else is it but prayer over a man?" (M.L. 43, 149). Likewise Cyprian, *On the Lapsed*, 16: "Before the offences have been expiated, before confession of the crime has been made, before the conscience has been purged by the sacrifice and hand of the priest, before the offence against the indignant and threatening Lord has been appeased, violence is done to His body and blood" (M.L. 4, 493).

Nevertheless, the principal and more distinctive names of this sacrament in ecclesiastical usage are *Penance* (*poenitentia*) among the Latins and *metanoia* (μετάνοια) among the Greeks.

In these names one must distinguish between their etymology and their imposition, that is, the signification of the name taken simply.

Concerning PENANCE—a term applied to three things, namely, to the sacrament, to the virtue, and to works of satisfaction—there are, with respect to its *etymology*, three opinions: one Protestant and two Catholic.

Many Protestants, following Erasmus (*Annotations* on Matthew, chapter 5), in order also to confirm by the etymological force of the name their opinion that penance consists not in sorrow for sins committed but solely in a change of life, have derived the name *poenitentia* from *pone tenere*, so that it would mean "to understand afterwards" or "to hold counsel afterwards" (like the Greek word μετάνοια), and hence, by an immediate derivation or the primary imposition of the name, "to change one's counsel" and "to come to one's senses." Whatever may be said of this arbitrary etymology, the name itself does not favour the Protestant proposition; for the meaning of a word is to be judged not so much from its etymology as from the meaning imposed upon it, of which we shall speak below.

The most common opinion among Catholics is that the name *poenitentia* is derived from *poena*, or *poenam tenere* (to hold or undergo punishment), or from *poenire* (the verb *poenio* being used for *punio*), so that it denotes the undergoing or inflicting of punishment and signifies undergoing punishment for sins committed, or punishing in oneself what one has committed. In this meaning there are virtually and presuppositively included displeasure at what has been committed and a change of counsel, from which proceeds the aforesaid desire for retribution and amendment.

Thus the ancient author of the book *On True and False Penance* (among the works falsely attributed to Augustine),[11] chapters 19 and 35, writes: "One must continually grieve over sin, as the very force of the word declares. For to repent is to hold punishment, so that one may always punish in oneself, by grieving, what one committed by sinning. For punishment is properly called an injury, which punishes and avenges what anyone has committed. He holds punishment who always avenges, with sorrow, what he grieves to have committed. Penance, therefore, is a retribution which continually punishes in oneself what one grieves to have committed" (M.L. 40, 1128 ff.).

[11] The author of this work is probably later than St. Isidore of Seville himself. Some scholars date it to about the year 1100.

Thus especially Isidore of Seville, whom later theologians cite and follow, asks: "It is called *poenitentia*, as though *punientia*, because a man punishes himself by repenting of what he has done amiss; for those who truly repent do nothing other than prevent what they have done amiss from going unpunished. For by this means he shows no mercy to himself, and the one whose high and just judgment no despiser escapes shows mercy to him" (M.L. 82, 258).

M. Cano, *Relectio de poenitentiae sacramento*, p. 1, no. 3, writes: "No one is ignorant that *poenitentia* is derived from *poena*; punishment, however, is a kind of retribution for past guilt. Hence even the old writers used the verb *poenio* for *punio*. But when we suffer, as it were, punishment within ourselves for things done amiss, nature itself taking vengeance, then we are properly said to repent."

The Salmanticenses, *On Penance*, proemium, no. 1, write: "Penance, therefore, as the more distinguished masters of the Greek and Latin tongues teach, is derived from the verb *poenitere*. Now *poenitere* means the same thing as holding punishment, not of anything whatever, but of past things: insofar as one who repents, by inwardly grieving and detesting what is past, undergoes a punishment either voluntarily assumed or prudently assessed by another from without."[12]

[12] *Cursus Theologicus*, vol. 19 (Paris, 1883), p. 1.

Several modern writers follow this same etymology, such as Gihr, Einig, Hugon, Diekamp, and Knabenbauer, who writes: "The Latin *poenitere*, *poenitentiam agere*, well expresses the notion of μετανοεῖν; for one who truly repents of evil deeds is also prepared and ready to punish them in himself, and, by making satisfaction for the faults committed, to repair and abolish his errors."[13]

[13] *Commentary on Matthew* (3, 2) (Paris, 1903), p. 125.

Certain modern writers, such as Bréal-et-Bailly,[14] Galtier, D'Alès, Tanquerey, E. Amann,[15] and Boyer, maintain that the word *poenitentia* is derived from *paene* or *paenitus* (with the ancient spelling, as they say, of the word *paenitentia*, not *poenitentia*) and therefore signifies something inward which affects the heart (*paenitus* or *penitus*: deeply, inwardly, completely, beyond, from the heart), and, by immediate derivation, an inward weariness of soul or sorrow for sins committed (in which a change of counsel is indirectly connoted); thus the meaning of the Latin word *paenitentia* would almost coincide with that of the Greek word μετάνοια, which directly expresses a change of counsel and indirectly connotes the sorrow of the soul itself.

[14] *Latin Etymological Dictionary* (Paris, 1886).

[15] *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, article "Pénitence," col. 722 ff.

To this effect Galtier writes: "The name *paenitentia*, which the ancients derived from *poena*, ... the more recent writers say takes its origin from the word *paene*, *paenitus*, so that *paenitentia*, in its primary signification, directly denotes an inward weariness of the soul or sorrow of the soul over some prior act of the will, while indirectly connoting a change of counsel arising from it. We are accustomed to say 'to repent' when the things we ourselves have done, or the things done by our will and counsel, begin to displease us, and we change our judgment about them" (A. Gellius, *Attic Nights*, XVII, 1). Tertullian, more briefly, defines the repentance of the Gentiles, as he says it is understood in common usage, as "a certain passion of the mind arising from displeasure at an earlier judgment" (*On Penance*, I, 1).

"The Greek name μετάνοια, which derives from the verb μετανοεῖν, directly signifies a change of counsel and is not rarely employed in that etymological and absolute sense. Indirectly, however, it connotes the repudiation of a preceding act, which the word *paenitentia* signifies directly."[16]

[16] *De Poenitentia*, Introduction, 1 (Paris, 1931), p. 1.

Nevertheless, the arguments advanced by these authors are not convincing, nor do they establish a sufficient reason for departing from the more common and traditional opinion. The reason drawn from the written form (*paenitentia*), even if the form be conceded to be ancient, is not decisive. It is not clear how the word *paene* (that is, "almost") leads to the sense intended by these doctors. The word *paenitus* (that is, "inwardly") is itself merely an adverb and does not, for that reason, appear to involve the concept of any action (an inward grieving) or effect (inward sorrow). The testimonies adduced from Gellius and Tertullian concern not the etymology of the name but its usage or imposition.

Whatever may be the etymology, *as regards the meaning assigned to the name*, the Protestants, pursuing the same purpose mentioned above, contend with all their strength that Penance is to be understood as a mere change of counsel or a new resolution concerning one's life, and not also as an act of detestation of sin committed and a fitting expiation of that sin, as all Catholic doctors maintain together with the Council of Trent (session XIV, chapter 4 and canon 13).

To establish this opinion, the innovators appeal to the etymological meaning both of the Latin word *poenitentia* (thus Erasmus; cf. above, p. 5) and, especially, of the Greek word *metanoia* (μετάνοια) (thus, after Lorenzo Valla, Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, Beza, and others generally, even among modern authors). This Greek word means a change of counsel and is rendered by the Vulgate as *poenitentia* (a translation which, they say, is inappropriate if *poenitentia* is derived from *poenam tenere*, but appropriate if it is derived from *pone tenere*). They also appeal to the Hebrew word *shub* (שׁוּב; to return or to turn back; see below, p. 12) (Theodore Beza), which the Vulgate likewise renders by "to do penance."

Consequently the innovators have generally endeavoured to banish the word *poenitentia*—which, they see, cannot easily be twisted to their meaning —both from translations of Scripture and from liturgical and theological usage, and to substitute various other words which do not include the concept of satisfaction and which more properly express the idea of conversion, or of a change of mind or life. Already Melanchthon began to bid farewell to the words *poenitentia* and *poenitere*, something which Luther himself did not venture to do; Calvin, going further, almost never uses these words, but employs the French expressions "repentance, repentir, amendement, s'amender"; Beza prefers the word "resipiscentia"; and modern English and German writers prefer the terms "repentance, to repent, conversion, to forthink, Busse, Reue, Bekehrung, Umkehr, Sinnesänderung."[17]

[17] Cf. A. H. Dirksen, *The New Testament Concept of Metanoia* (Washington, D.C., 1932), pp. 220–225.

Concerning Lorenzo Valla, Erasmus, and Beza, take the following from Bellarmine:

"*LORENZO VALLA*, who seems to have been a kind of precursor of the Lutheran party, writes in his *Annotations* on chapter 7 of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians that the Greek words *metanoia* and *metameleia* (μετάνοια and μεταμέλεια) are more elegant than the Latin word *poenitentia*, because Penance signifies sorrow for what has been committed, whereas those words signify amendment of mind. From this he concludes that those who derive a threefold Penance from that passage of Paul

accomplish nothing: one which is contrition, another which is confession, and a third which is satisfaction; for in Paul only those two words, *metanoia* and *metameleia*, are found."

"*ERASMUS*, who may be called another precursor of Luther, in his *Annotations on the New Testament* on chapter 3 of Matthew and very frequently elsewhere, prefers that, wherever we read *metanoein* and *metanoia* (μετανοεῖν and μετάνοια), the translation be 'to come to one's senses' and 'return to one's senses' (*resipiscere* and *resipiscentia*), rather than 'to repent' and 'penance' (*poenitere* and *poenitentia*). 'Our common people,' he says, 'think that to do penance means to undergo some prescribed punishment for what has been committed; this arose because, among Christians, those who had sinned publicly were cast out of fellowship and were publicly afflicted, and that satisfaction or punishment began to be called penance. From this circumstance a considerable error has crept in among certain theologians, who twist what Augustine wrote concerning Penance—that is, public satisfaction—into sorrow of soul, which they call contrition. Otherwise *metanoia* is derived from *metanoein*, that is, from understanding afterwards, when someone, having fallen, perceives his error only after the deed has been done.' And further on he maintains not merely that the Greek word *metanoein* means returning to one's senses (as many others have done, Luther himself citing Erasmus as an authority in the *Resolutions*), but even attempts to transform *poenitentia* into *resipiscentia*, something which perhaps no one else has dared. For he wishes, both here in Matthew 3 and below in Second Corinthians 7, to derive *poenitentia* not from *poena* but from *pone tenere*, as though to repent meant nothing other than to adopt a resolution afterwards, or, as he himself says, to understand after the fact; whence among the Greeks it is also called *metanea*."

"*THEODORE BEZA*, in his annotations on chapter 3 of Matthew, condemns the rendering of those who have translated *metanoeite* (μετανοεῖτε), not by 'Come to your senses,' but by 'Do penance,' speaking as follows: 'I reject this translation for many reasons, but especially because many uninstructed persons have seized on this manner of speaking as an occasion for false opinions concerning satisfaction, by which the Church is troubled today.'"[18]

[18] *De Poenitentia*, I, 1, c. 7, in *Opera omnia*, vol. 3 (Milan, 1859), p. 596.

LUTHER, in his letter to Staupitz, the vicar general of his order, in the year 1518, boasts that from the study of very learned men (namely Erasmus and Lorenzo Valla) he learned that the word *Penance* does not signify, as was formerly supposed, hatred or displeasure at one's former life, but only love of justice and of a new life. His own words are:

"After this there was added the fact that, through the study and kindness of very learned men, who most obligingly teach us Greek and Hebrew, I learned that this same word is in Greek called *metanoia* (μετάνοια), from *meta* and *nous*, that is, from 'after' and 'mind,' so that penance, or *metanoia*, is a return to one's senses, an understanding of one's evil after suffering harm and recognizing one's error, something which cannot occur without a change of affections and of love. All this corresponds so fittingly to Pauline theology that, in my judgment at least, scarcely anything could illustrate Paul more aptly. Finally, I made progress and perceived that *metanoia* can be derived not only from 'after' and 'mind,' but also from 'across' and 'mind' (let this derivation be violent, if you will), so that *metanoia* would signify a transmutation of mind and affections, which seems to breathe forth not merely a change of affections but also the manner of changing, namely the grace of God. For that passage of the mind, that is, the truest penance, is exceedingly celebrated in Holy Scripture, as the ancient Passover once signified. Christ manifested it, and long before Abraham also prefigured it,

when he began to be called a passer-over, that is, a Hebrew, because he crossed over into Mesopotamia, as Burgensis learnedly teaches. The title of that Psalm likewise harmonizes with this, where Jeduthun, that is, one who passes over, is introduced as a singer. Adhering to these considerations, I have dared to think those men mistaken who have attributed so much to the works of penance that they have left us scarcely anything of penance beyond certain cold satisfactions and most laborious confession, having been led astray, evidently, by the Latin term, since 'to do penance' sounds more like an action than a change of affections, and does not at all answer to that Greek *metanoia*."[19]

[19] Enders, *Luthers Briefwechsel*, vol. 1, p. 197.

In *Sermon 2 on Penance*, he says that nothing bitter is found in Penance but everything is gentle and agreeable, and he defines it in the following words condemned by Leo X: "This is the truest proverb, and a teaching more excellent than all the contributions offered hitherto: not to do so henceforth is the highest penance; the best penance is a new life" (Denz. 747).

CALVIN, Institutes of the Christian Religion, chapter 9, no. 4: "The name of penance is derived by the Hebrews from conversion, and by the Greeks from a change of mind and counsel. Nor does the reality itself ill accord with either etymology: its sum is that, having turned away from ourselves, we turn toward God, and, laying aside our former mind, put on a new one. In my judgment, then, penance can be well defined as a true conversion of our life to God, proceeding from a sincere and serious fear of God, and consisting in the mortification of our flesh and of the old man, and in the vivification of the spirit."[20]

[20] *Corpus Reformatorum*, vol. 29; *Calvini Opera omnia*, vol. 1 (Brunswick, 1863), col. 688.

In his *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 2:38: "'Do penance.' The Greek word is of greater emphasis, for it signifies a conversion of the mind, so that the whole man may be renewed and become another. It deserves careful notice that, through the unskilfulness of translators, this doctrine has been corrupted under the papacy. For I know not what external rites they have transferred to the name of penance. They babble, indeed, a little about contrition of heart, but treat that part as though it were of no consequence. Above all, they insist on external bodily exercises, which, even if there be no fault in them, would be of little moment. Moreover, they bring in nothing besides the common nonsense with which they uselessly weary men. Wherefore let us know that this is true penance, when a man is renewed in the spirit of his mind, as Paul teaches in the twelfth chapter of Romans (v. 2)."[21]

[21] *Corpus Reformatorum*, vol. 48; *Calvini Opera omnia*, vol. 20 (Brunswick, 1892), col. 51.

Nevertheless, the innovators have recourse to etymological quibbles in vain: first, because even the etymology of the Greek word at least indirectly implies the act of detestation from which arise a change of counsel and the desire for punishment; and, above all, because the meaning of any word is to be judged not so much from its etymology as from its usage, from which the assignment of the name's signification proceeds.

Now it is manifest, from both profane and sacred usage, that the name *Penance* includes both acts, that of detestation and that of amendment.

Among the testimonies of *profane usage*, besides the statements of Gellius and Tertullian cited above (pp. 6 ff.), consider the following. *Ovid*, *Epistles from Pontus*, I, 1, 57–60: "The gods often lighten penalties, and eyes once snatched away are restored, when they see that one has duly repented of wrongdoing. I repent; O, if any unfortunate man is to be believed at all, I repent, and I myself am more severely tormented by what I have done." *Cicero*, *Tusculan Disputations*, IV, 37: "We saw King Alexander, because he had killed his intimate friend Clitus, scarcely restrain his hands from himself: so great was the force of his repentance." *Ausonius*, *Epigrams*, 12, bringing in the goddess Penance, says: "I am the goddess who both exacts penalties for deeds done and for deeds not done. For indeed, as one repents, so I am called Metanaea."

Among the testimonies of *sacred usage*, besides the words cited above (p. 5) from the author of *On True and False Penance* and Isidore of Seville, and the passages of Scripture cited below, where the Greek term *metanoia* is rendered in the Latin version by the word *poenitentia*, consider the following:

Cyprian, *On the Lapsed*, 32 and 35: "Perform full penance; manifest the sorrow of a grieving and lamenting soul. ... Examine your sins, you who repent and grieve, and recognize the most grievous crime of your conscience. ... As great as our transgression was, so greatly ought we to weep. For a deep wound the attentive and long-continued medicine must not cease. Penance must not be less than the crime" (M.L. 4, 507).

Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, VI, 24: "For the man who repents of his deed acknowledges his former error; and accordingly the Greeks say *metanoein*, with better and more expressive meaning than we can give by saying 'to come to one's senses.' For he comes to his senses, and, as it were, recalls his mind from the madness whose error he regrets; he rebukes himself for his folly, and strengthens his mind for living more rightly; and above all he takes care not to be brought back into those same snares" (M.L. 6, 722 ff.).

Augustine, *Sermon* 351, 5, 12: "It is not ... enough to change one's conduct for the better and to turn away from evil deeds, unless satisfaction is also made to God for the things that have been done, through the sorrow of penance, through the groaning of humility, through the sacrifice of a contrite heart. ... For it was not said that we should merely abstain from sins, but: 'And for the former ones,' he says, 'pray to the Lord that they may be forgiven you' (Ecclus. 21:1). And Peter was already faithful, and had already baptized others in Christ. Nevertheless he himself carried the presumption of his accusation, the fearfulness of his wounding, and the tears of his healing" (M.L. 39, 1549).

Gregory the Great, *Homilies on the Gospels*, XXXIV, 15: "For to do penance is to lament evils committed, and not to commit things that ought to be lamented. For he who so bewails some sins that he nevertheless commits others is still doing penance, or disguises it, or knows nothing of it" (M.L. 76, 1256).

As regards the etymology of the word *METANOIA* (μετανοέω: I understand afterwards, I change my mind; from *meta*: after or across, and *nous*: mind), all agree, both Catholics and Protestants, that it yields as its immediate sense a change of counsel. Nevertheless, this is accompanied by a difference: the Protestants, following their position already mentioned, see no sense of detestation joined to it; the Catholics, on the other hand, maintain that detestation is also connoted indirectly, as a cause in its effect, namely the change of counsel.

As regards the *usage and imposition of the name*, the same earlier Reformers cited above teach that this word expresses only the concept of a change of counsel, and in no way the concept of detestation. All modern writers, both orthodox and liberal, confirm this at length, although they do not speak clearly or agree among themselves concerning the more precise determination of that concept.[22] Nevertheless, that interpretation, taken in its exclusive sense, is arbitrary and false, as is evident both from the profane and sacred usage of the word, from the meaning of the Hebrew word *noham*

[22] Cf. A. H. Dirksen, *The New Testament Concept of Metanoia* (Washington, D.C., 1932), pp. 2– 4 and 81 ff.

(נחם), which in the Greek version of Scripture is rendered by μετανοεῖν, and from the meaning of the word *poenitentia*, by which this same Greek word is rendered in the Vulgate.[23]

[23] Dirksen discusses at length the meaning of metanoia and related terms among the Fathers, in Scripture, and in profane authors, in the same work; see especially pp. 8–59 (Fathers), 93– 95, 114–129, 148–157, 201–218 (Scripture), and 165–196 (profane authors). On these terms among Greek profane writers before A.D. 100, see especially Thompson, *Metanoeo and Metamelei in Greek Literature until 100 A.D.* (1908).

Plutarch says that Timoleon, after his brother had been killed, "broken by repentance and grief" (μετανοίᾳ καὶ λύπῃ ταπεινωθείς), abstained for twenty whole years from the tribunals and from appearing in the forum.[24] He likewise teaches that the sorrow by which dogs and horses, when chastised, are corrected is called *metanoia*.[25] *Lucian* brings forward *Metanoia* as a weeping figure,[26] and relates that Apelles, in his painting *On Calumny*, depicted her as a woman who walked "in exceedingly mournful dress, clad in black and ragged; for she looked backward, weeping, and looked with utter shame upon Truth as she approached" (*On Calumny*, 5). The same writer (*On Dancing*, 83–84) relates that a dancer who, forgetting moderation in his art, had imitated Ajax in his madness to excess, "repented" (μετανοῆσαι ἐφ' οἷς ἐποίησε) of this to such an extent that he fell ill through grief.[27]

[24] Plutarch, Timoleon and Aemilius Paulus, *Parallel Lives*, II, 8.

[25] Plutarch, *Moralia*, *On the Cleverness of Animals*, 3, 961 D.

[26] Lucian, *On the Salaried Posts*, 42.

[27] Galtier, *De Paenitentia* (Paris, 1931), p. 1 ff.

Lactantius (cited above, p. 10) aptly discloses the mind of the Greek Fathers, rendering the Greek word *metanoia* by the Latin *resipiscentia*, which, he says, is found in one who, being displeased with his error, recovers his mind, as it were, from madness.

In the *Scripture of the New Testament*, a sense of detestation likewise underlies this word, which occurs very frequently, both in the verbal form (μετανοεῖν): Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 11:20, 21; 12:41; Mark 1:15; 6:12; Luke 10:13; 11:32; 13:3, 5; 15:7, 10; 16:30; 17:3, 4; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 17:30; 26:20; 2 Cor. 12:21; Apoc. 2:5, 16, 21, 22; 3:3, 19; 9:20, 21; 16:9, 11; and in the nominal form (μετάνοια): Matt. 3:8, 11; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3, 8; 5:32; 15:7; 24:47; Acts 5:31; 11:18; 19:4; 26:20; Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:9, 10; 2 Tim. 2:25; Heb. 6:1, 16; 2 Pet. 3:9.

The same is observed in the *Scripture of the Old Testament*, both in the Book of Wisdom, composed in Greek (11:24; 12:10, 19), and in the other books written in Hebrew. In these the word *noham* (נחם), or in the verbal form *niham* (נחם), which is rendered by the Septuagint as μετανοεῖν (or the related word μεταμέλειν), often signifies displeasure or sorrow over a past act (cf. Exod. 13:17; Prov. 5:11; Jer. 8:6; 31:19; Job 42:6; Judg. 21:6, 15). The very word *shub* (שׁוּב), invoked above (p. 7) by Beza, although it immediately signifies conversion and is therefore more exactly rendered by the Septuagint with the

words ἐπιστρέφειν and ἀποστρέφειν, nevertheless implies from its context a sense of displeasure when the matter concerns conversion from sin to God. Accordingly, it is not inappropriately rendered in the Vulgate by the expression "to do penance" (cf. 2 Chron. 6:24; 7:14; 3 Kings 8:33; Ezek. 18:21, 30).

Real definition.[28]

METAPHYSICAL DEFINITION: The sacrament of spiritual restoration (or of spiritual absolution, or of the remission of sins committed after Baptism).

[28] Cf. the discussion of the definition of a sacrament in general in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General* (art. 2, note 1, pp. 68–75; and art. 4, note 2, pp. 104 ff.), and the Salmanticenses, *De Poenitentia*, disputation 1, doubt 3.

In this definition, *sacrament* is the *proximate genus* (or metaphysical matter), while *spiritual restoration* is the *specific difference* (or metaphysical form). In place of spiritual restoration, one could say spiritual absolution, or the remission of sins committed after Baptism; indeed, this last expression is the best of all. But to avoid excessive length we have chosen the expression "spiritual restoration," in which the others are equivalently contained, since restoration presupposes baptismal generation.

Equivalent but less proper definition: A sign of a sacred thing, insofar as it spiritually restores man.

Description: A sign and cause of restoring grace; or: a practical sign of restoring grace.

PHYSICAL DEFINITION: A sorrowful confession of sins under the form of absolution, signifying spiritual restoration.

In this definition, the sorrowful confession (comprising within itself confession, contrition, and satisfaction) is the *matter*; the absolution of the priest is the *form*; while the relation of the sign to spiritual restoration is the *ultimate form of the whole composite artefact*.

Description: An artificial composite made up of the acts of the penitent (namely, confession, contrition, and satisfaction) and the absolution of the priest, which come together as matter and form in one subject of the relation of a sign of spiritually restoring grace, caused by that same subject.

Both definitions may be combined into one in this manner: The sacrament of spiritual restoration through penance, in the word.

The combined description is expressed thus: A sacrament of the New Law by which, through the absolution of the priest, spiritual restoration, or the remission of sins committed after Baptism, is conferred upon a penitent man, that is, one who confesses, is contrite, and makes satisfaction.

II. Principles of the Treatise

II. PRINCIPLES OF THE TREATISE

1. Scripture.

That imperfect sacrament of Penance which existed under the Old Law is the most excellent *figure* of this sacrament, just as Circumcision is the figure of Baptism, and the Paschal Lamb of the Eucharist. For, as was said in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General* (art. 40, conclusions 2 and 3, p. 502 ff.), "in the Old Law and in the law of nature there was in some manner a sacrament of Penance" (q. 86, a. 6, in response to the *Sed contra*; cf. q. 84, a. 7, ad 2; *In IV Sent.*, dist. 1, q. 1, a. 2, q. 3, ad 2), consisting

principally in the various purifications of that law (I–II, q. 102, a. 5, ad 3). Yet it lacked the power of the keys, or the judicial power of remitting sins; for this power, since it is something derived from the Passion of Christ, or an instrument of Christ's own power for applying the merits of His Passion, is a special charism of the messianic age (q. 84, a. 7, ad 2). In this sense are to be understood the words of the Council of Trent: "Before the coming of Christ, Penance was not a sacrament" (session XIV, chapter 1; Denz. 894).[29]

[29] Cf. Salmanticenses, *De Poenitentia*, disputation 4, doubt 2, no. 43.

The Baptism of John also (discussed in the treatise *On Baptism*, art. 19, pp. 238–248), since it was a rite of penance, was a figure of this sacrament in respect of its effect, just as it was a figure of the sacrament of Baptism in respect of its matter (as stated in the Introduction to that treatise, p. 10 ff.).

In various passages of the New Testament, according to the Fathers and theologians, different suggestions and allusions to this sacrament are found, as follows:

Luke 19:1–10: The conversion of Zacchaeus.

John 11:33–44: The resurrection of Lazarus. Verse 44: "Loose him, and let him go."[30]

[30] Cf. *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, part II, chapter 5, question 40; Origen, *On John*, tome 28, 5 ff.; Ambrose, *On Penance*, II, 7, 56 ff.; Augustine, *On John*, tractates 22, 7 and 50, 24; Sermons 67, 2–3; 98, 6 ff.; 295, 3; 352, 3; *On Psalm 101*, part 2, 3; Gregory the Great, Homily 26 on the Gospels, 6. Cf. below, art. 36, on the necessity of confession.

Matthew 9:1–8: The absolution of the paralytic. Verse 2: "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee." Verse 6: "But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, then saith he to the man sick of the palsy: Arise ..." Verse 8: "And the multitudes seeing it, feared, and glorified God that gave such power to men."

Luke 17:12–19: The cleansing of the ten lepers. Verse 14: "Go, show yourselves to the priests."[31]

[31] Cf. *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, loc. cit.

John 8:1–11: The absolution of the adulterous woman. Verse 11: "Neither will I condemn thee. Go, and now sin no more."

Luke 7:37–50: The absolution of the sinful woman. Verses 47–50: "Wherefore I say to thee: Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much. ... And he said to her: Thy sins are forgiven thee. ... Thy faith hath made thee safe; go in peace."

Luke 15: The parable of the prodigal son.

John 13:8–10: The washing of the Apostles' feet at the Last Supper (cf. the treatise *On Baptism*, art. 8, p. 98).

Apocalypse 20:4: "And I saw seats, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them." Augustine teaches that these words are to be understood of the judicial power of the Church (*City of God*, XX, 9, 2; cited below, p. 119 ff.).

The principal passages which certainly and directly concern the *institution* of this sacrament are: Matt. 16:17–19 (verse 19: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind ..."); Matt. 18:15–18 (verse 18: "Whatsoever you shall bind ..."), in which the matter is one of *promise*; and John 20:19–23 (verse 23: "Whose sins you

shall forgive ..."), which concerns the *institution itself* (cf. Matt. 28:18 compared with John 20:21, and Luke 24:47 compared with John 20:23).

The force of these passages will be examined below in article 1 (p. 71 ff.).

In the *Pauline epistles*, the *exercise* of this power of the keys conferred by Christ is shown: in 1 Cor. 5:3–5, judgment, or the power of binding, is exercised against the incestuous Corinthian; in 1 Tim. 1:19 ff., the same judgment is exercised against Hymenaeus and Alexander (cf. 2 Cor. 13:2 ff.); and in 2 Cor. 2:6–11, the power of loosing is exercised.

All the texts mentioned above refer more directly to the *institution* and *general character* of this sacrament. The texts, however, which concern particular heads of the doctrine of Penance will be given subsequently in the various articles, and are also collected in the Exegetical Index at the end of each volume.

2. The Fathers and Theologians

THE FATHERS regard Penance as a true sacrament, numbering it among the sacraments and comparing it with Baptism as another baptism and a second plank of salvation (cf. above, p. 3 ff.), although they do not commonly employ the designation *sacrament* (or *mystery*), nor do they directly inquire into its sacramental nature or the theological account of its parts, namely absolution, confession, contrition, and satisfaction. The principal question which, because of the heresies that arose, was explicitly and insistently pressed upon their consideration was the question of the rationale, or rather the extent, of the power of the keys in the Church.

From the *second century* we find only a few and incidental testimonies, with the exception of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, which is the principal document of the penitential teaching of that period. The reason for this lies both in the *scarcity of surviving documents* from that age and in the very *condition of the Church*: on the one hand, the earlier Fathers were entirely occupied with expounding and defending the fundamental truths of the faith; on the other, no heresy concerning the sacrament of Penance had yet arisen, its use was comparatively rare because of the custom of deferring the Baptism of many persons until a later age, and the life of the first Christians was comparatively fervent. Accordingly, an organized discipline for the administration of this sacrament did not yet exist, just as it did not yet exist for the administration of Baptism and the Eucharist.

From the *beginning of the third century*, explicit and direct testimonies progressively multiply, whether in liturgical and canonical books (the *Constitutions of the Egyptian Church*, the *Didascalia of the Apostles*, the *Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, the canonical epistles of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, and the *Apostolic Constitutions*), or in theological and polemical writings (such as those of Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, Pacian, and Augustine). The reason was, first, the growing number of public sinners and apostates, especially amid the dangers of persecutions; secondly, the corresponding organization of penitential discipline; and thirdly, in particular, the outbreak of heresies or the agitation of the threefold controversy concerning the extension of the power of the keys: namely, the controversy with the *Montanists* (third century) over the absolution of the more serious crimes of apostasy, murder, and fornication (in which the names of Pope Callistus and Tertullian stand out); the controversy concerning the *Lapsed or the Libellatici* (third century) over the absolution of those who had lapsed into apostasy during the persecution of Decius (in which Cyprian stands out); and the

controversy with the *Novatianists* (third and fourth centuries) concerning the absolution of graver sinners (in which Ambrose and Pacian stand out).

The principal works of the Fathers on Penance are as follows:[32]

[32] Migne gives an extensive bibliographical index, *M.L.* 218, 1264–1267; 219, 883–898; 221, 1057 ff. and 1244 ff. An exposition of the principal works is given by E. Amann in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, art. "Pénitence," cols. 757–795.

Hermas, *Pastor* (mid-second century). Funk, *Patres Apostolici*, Tübingen, 1901.

Tertullian (died after A.D. 222), *De Poenitentia* (a Catholic work, A.D. 200–206); *De Pudicitia* (a Montanist work, A.D. 217–222). M.L. 1 and 2.

Cyprian (died 258), *De lapsis*; epistles throughout (cf., for example, Epistles 10 and 17, concerning the *libellatici*; Epistle 52, concerning the Novatianists; Epistle 62, concerning the fall of virgins). M.L. 4.

Gregory Thaumaturgus (died about 270), Canonical Epistle. M.G. 10.

Peter of Alexandria (died 311), Canonical Epistle. M.G. 18.

Didascalia Apostolorum (*La Didascalie des Apôtres*, translated from the Syriac by F. Nau, Paris, 1912).

Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum. Edition by F. X. Funk, 2 vols., Paderborn, 1905.

Testamentum D.N.J.C. (in Syriac and Latin). Edition by I. E. Rahmani, Mainz, 1899.

Aphraates (died in the middle of the fourth century), *De Poenitentibus*, Demonstration 5. *Patrologia Syriaca* (Graffin–Nau), 1.

Ephrem (died 373), *Ad Paenitentes*, seventy-six exhortations (*Opera Syr.- Lat.*, vol. 3, Rome, 1743); *De Paenitentia* (*Opera Graec.-Lat.*, vol. 3, Rome, 1746).

Basil (died 379), three canonical epistles addressed to Amphilochius (i.e., Epistles 188, 199, and 217). M.G. 32.

Gregory Nazianzen (died 389–390), Orations 25 and 39. M.G. 35 and 36.

Gregory of Nyssa (died about 394), Canonical Epistle. M.G. 45.

Pacian (died about 390), three epistles to Sympronian; *Exhortation to Penance*. M.L. 13.

Ambrose (died 397), *De Poenitentia*; Epistles 25 and 51; *Oration on the Death of Theodosius*. M.L. 16.

Augustine, *De peccatorum meritis et remissione* (M.L. 44); Sermon 71 (M.L. 38); Sermon 351 (M.L. 39); Sermon 352 (M.L. 39).

Faustus of Riez (died about 500), *Sermon to the Monks on Penance*. M.L. 58.

Fulgentius of Ruspe (died 533), *De remissione peccatorum ad Euthymium*. M.L. 65.

Pseudo-Ambrose (perhaps Victor of Cartenna, toward the end of the fifth century), *Liber de Poenitentia*. M.L. 17.

Pseudo-Augustine, *De vera et falsa poenitentia* (a work of uncertain date, referring to a penitential discipline much later than Augustine, such as was observed around A.D. 1100). M.L. 40.

Among the three ancient Roman Sacramentaries (namely, the Leonine, Gelasian, and Gregorian), only the *Gelasian* (chapter 38) speaks of the rite of Penance itself. M.L. 74, 1095 ff.

Between the end of the Patristic age and the beginning of the age of the theologians there appeared the so-called *penitential books*. Among the other writers, the following deserve mention: *Egbert* (died 766; *Poenitentiale*, M.L. 89), *Cummianus* (seventh century; *Liber de mensura poenitentiarum*, M.L. 87), *Alcuin* (died 804; *De confessione peccatorum, ad pueros S. Martini*, M.L. 101), *Halitgar* (died 831; *De vitiis et virtutibus et de ordine poenitentium*, M.L. 105), and *Rabanus Maurus* (died 856; *Poenitentium liber*, M.L. 112).

THE THEOLOGIANS OF THE MIDDLE AGES turn their attention to the sacramental character of the rite of Penance itself.

In the *twelfth century*, especially in *Peter Lombard* (*Sentences*, Book IV, distinctions 14–22), a certain scientific synthesis of the matters pertaining to this sacrament was assembled.

The Master calls Penance a sacrament and assigns it the fourth place in his catalogue of seven (distinction 2); he distinguishes in it the sacrament alone, the reality and sacrament, and the reality alone (distinction 22). He disputes concerning penance as a virtue (distinction 14); concerning the object of penance, or whether anyone who repents of one sin without repenting of all sins truly repents (distinction 15); likewise, whether certain venial sins are remitted in purgatory (distinction 21), and whether sins once remitted return to life (distinction 22); concerning the three acts of Penance, namely confession, sorrow, and satisfaction (distinction 16); concerning the necessity of confession (distinction 17); concerning absolution, or the power of the keys in the priest (distinction 18); concerning the minister (distinction 19); and concerning the subject (distinction 20).

As appears from the Master's exposition, *three principal questions* are disputed by the authors of that age, namely: (1) *the power of absolution*, that is, whether the priest truly remits sins; to this the Master himself replies that God alone properly absolves inwardly, while the priest declares that a man has been absolved (distinction 18); (2) *the validity of the absolution of an unworthy priest*, to which he replies in the affirmative with certain others, but with some caution, saying: "Others, however, think, as I acknowledge is also pleasing to me ..." (distinction 19); (3) *the revival of sins*, that is, whether sins previously remitted are again imputed to one who falls into some new sin; to this he replies in the negative, but cautiously introduces the question with these words: "The solution of this question is obscure and perplexing" (distinction 22).

What is principally considered by Peter Lombard and the other doctors in the sacrament of Penance is the *subjective element*, that is to say, *contrition itself*, but in such a way that this improperly tends to the detriment of the efficacy of the objective element, or of the sensible sacrament itself. In this lies the *defect* of the penitential theology of those doctors, whom the Protestants themselves, although inappropriately, invoked as precursors of their doctrine. For they seem to teach that perfect contrition is required for the sacrament of Penance, that is, a contrition which by itself already has the power to justify before the sacrament; whence it follows that the sensible sacrament itself is not the cause of justification, but confession and satisfaction are merely conditions to be fulfilled afterward, while absolution is merely a declaration of the remission of sins previously effected.

In the *thirteenth century*, especially in *ST. THOMAS*, the theological synthesis of this sacrament was perfected.

The Holy Doctor, overtaken by death, was unable to complete his treatment of Penance in the *Summa Theologiae*. Nevertheless, from what he wrote there (questions 84–90), or intended to write (cf. the prologue to question 84), and from the matters discussed elsewhere by him, namely in the *Commentary on the Sentences* (Supplement to the *Summa Theologiae*, questions 1–28), *Summa contra Gentiles*, IV, 70–72; the opusculum *On the Articles of Faith and the Sacraments of the Church*; the opusculum *On the Form of Absolution*; and *Commentary on John*, chapter 11, lecture 6, no. 6, and chapter 20, lecture 4, no. 5, the following points are clear:

1. He arranges the questions concerning Penance in a logical manner according to the character of a sacrament and according to the general lines along which the other sacraments are treated: thus he first treats of the sacrament in general (question 84), to which he adds and subordinates, in a manner different from Peter Lombard, the question of the virtue of penance (question 85); secondly, of its effect (questions 86–89); thirdly, of its parts or matter (question 90 and Supplement, questions 1–15); fourthly, of its subject and minister (Supplement, questions 16–27); fifthly, of its rite or solemnity (Supplement, question 28).

2. He combines the subjective and objective elements in the one character of a true sacrament (that is, of a sign and cause of grace), in which the acts of the penitent are the matter and absolution is the form (question 90, article 1, ad 1; article 3; Supplement, question 10, article 1).

3. Consequently, he teaches that the priest himself, as the one who supplies the form of the sacrament, is an instrumental cause of the effect of the whole sacrament, rejecting the distinction of those who attributed to God alone the remission of guilt but to the priest absolution from punishment (Supplement, question 18, article 1; *Commentary on John*, chapter 11, lecture 6, no. 6; chapter 20, lecture 4, no. 5).

4. Consequently, contrary to the common opinion of Peter Lombard and certain other earlier doctors, he teaches that the absolution of the priest has not only a declarative but also an effective power (question 84, article 3, replies to objections 3 and 5; question 86, article 6; *On the Form of Absolution*, chapters 1–3).

5. He teaches that perfect contrition is not necessarily required in this sacrament, but that imperfect contrition is sufficient, which is now particularly called *attrition* (Supplement, question 18, article 1; *Commentary on John*, chapter 11, lecture 6, no. 6).

AMONG LATER THEOLOGIANS four principal *speculative questions* are raised and developed:

1. Concerning the acts of the penitent in general: whether they belong to the essence of the sacrament.

2. Concerning contrition: whether it justifies outside the sacrament, even in a diminished degree.

3. Concerning attrition: what kind of attrition is sufficient for the validity and efficacy of the sacrament; namely, whether it must include some love of God, and whether a certain attrition

can be sufficient for validity without thereby being sufficient for the efficacy of the sacrament, so that a sacrament of Penance could be valid yet *unformed*.

4. Concerning the effect, or the manner in which merits revive: whether merits rendered dead by sin are restored immediately and totally when justification is recovered through Penance.

Among *more recent theologians*, because of the Protestant heresy, which attacked the very existence of the sacrament, *positive theology* was developed, begun especially by *Petavius* (died 1652), *Morin* (died 1659), and *Thomassin* (died 1695). Among more modern doctors it finally assumed a purely *critical and historical*, rather than polemical, aspect, as in Boudinhon, Vacandard, Batiffol, Tixeront, D'Alès, Galtier, Funk, Kirsch, Rauschen, and Pignataro.

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3. DOCUMENTS OF THE CHURCH

The numerous decisions issued on this subject can conveniently be reduced to three classes, according to three distinct periods, centred upon three particularly noteworthy documents, in relation to three principal heresies and according to three more fundamental truths.

The first class extends from the earliest centuries to the Middle Ages; it is dominated by the decree of Callistus (third century); it opposes the heresies of the Montanists and their successors, the Novatianists and Donatists; it defends the extent of the power of the keys. Besides the decree of Callistus, the decisions of the First Council of Nicaea, Innocent I, and Leo the Great are especially prominent.

The second class runs from the Middle Ages to the Council of Trent; it is dominated by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215); it attacks Catharism, and particularly the sects of the Albigensians,

Waldensians, Wycliffites, and Hussites, precursors of Protestantism; it more directly defends the very existence of the power of the keys. Besides the Fourth Lateran Council, the Second Council of Lyons, the Council of Constance, and the Council of Florence are particularly prominent; the document of the last is, as it were, a summary of the subsequent decisions of Trent. In this period the particular errors of certain teachers are also condemned, namely those of John de Polliaco, the Armenians, Peter de Osma, and especially Luther, which foreshadowed the foundations of Protestantism.

The third class proceeds from the time of the Reformation to the present age; it is dominated by the Council of Trent (1545–1563); it opposes Protestantism and its twofold offspring, Jansenism and Modernism; it defends the extent and existence of the power of the keys and determines its sacramental essence and properties according to all the elements pertaining to this sacrament. Besides the Council of Trent itself, the documents of Pius V and Pius VI against the errors of the Baians and Jansenists, and Pius X's decree "Lamentabili" against the Modernists, stand out. The lesser documents concern either Jansenistic rigorism (Alexander VIII against the Jansenists, Clement XI against Quesnel, Benedict XIV), or the lax reaction of certain theologians in moral matters (Clement VIII, Alexander VII, Innocent XI).

It will be useful to review the individual documents briefly:

DECREE OF CALLISTUS († 222), as reported by Tertullian (De Pudicitia, 1), granted pardon for sins of fornication and adultery (Denz. 43).

COUNCIL OF ROME (251) condemned Novatian.

COUNCIL OF ELVIRA (ABOUT 300), in the West (Elvira in Spain), decreed that communion should be denied to certain sinners, especially those guilty of idolatry and homicide, even at the end of life (canons 1, 2, 3, 8, 17, 63; cf., however, 9, 20, 31, 32, 55, 79; Kirch, Enchir. hist. eccles., 330–344).

COUNCIL OF ANCYRA (314), in the East (Ancyra in Galatia), acting more leniently towards the aforesaid sinners, decreed the manner and duration of the penance which they must undergo, and their restoration to full communion with the Church when it has been completed (canons 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 22, 23; Kirch, Enchir. hist. eccles., 375–385).

FIRST COUNCIL OF ARLES (314), in the West (Arles in Gaul), shows greater severity (canon 14 and 22; Mansi, Concil., vol. 2, cols. 471–474).

FIRST COUNCIL OF NICAEA (325), in canon 13 commands that communion be granted to the dying (Denz. 57); in canon 8 it admits Novatianists to reconciliation, provided they consent to communicate with those who, having lapsed, have been reconciled by the Church (Denz. 55).

COUNCIL OF LAODICEA (BETWEEN 343 AND 381) admits all sinners to reconciliation once penance has been performed (Mansi, Concil., vol. 2, col. 563; cf. Denz. 924, note).

SIRICIUS, ROMAN PONTIFF († 399), Epistle 1, to Himerius, Bishop of Tarragona, 2 February 385, decrees concerning the manner of reconciling those who have fallen again into carnal pleasures (Kirch, Enchir. hist. eccles., 657).

INNOCENT I († 417), Epistle "Etsi tibi," to Victricius, Bishop of Rouen, 15 February 404, decrees that Novatianists and Montanists are to be reconciled by the laying on of hands alone (Denz. 94).

THE SAME, Epistle "Consulenti tibi," to Exuperius, Bishop of Toulouse, 20 February 405, commands that sinners who ask for it at the point of death be granted not only penance but also full communion, or Viaticum; he rejects the extreme harshness of the Novatianists and commands that the former practice of the Church be set aside, whereby the aforesaid sinners had been granted reconciliation through penance alone and excluded from communion or Viaticum (Denz. 95).

THE SAME, Epistle 25 to Decentius, Bishop of Gubbio, about 416, decrees concerning the reconciliation of the lapsed on Holy Thursday and their reconciliation without delay in danger of death; likewise, concerning the satisfaction to be performed and imposed according to the priest's judgment (Kirch, Enchir. hist. eccles., 727).

CELESTINE I († 432), Epistle "Cuperemus quidem," to the bishops of the provinces of Vienne and Narbonne, 26 July 428, condemns the great impiety of those who deny penance to the dying, commanding that it must not be denied to those asking for it at any time (Denz. 111).

LEO THE GREAT († 461), Epistle "Magna indignatio," to all the bishops of Campania, etc., 6 March 459, commands that the faithful are not obliged to make a public confession, since a secret confession, made to the priest alone, is sufficient and is in fact more expedient for drawing sinners to penance (Denz. 145).

THE SAME, Epistle "Sollicitudinis quidem tuae," to Theodore, Bishop of Forum Julii, 11 June 452, teaches both the power of the Church to remit sins and the conditions required for its exercise: namely, on the priest's part, absolution ("the supplications of the priests"); and on the penitent's part, contrition ("by his own judgment condemning himself"), confession ("to those confessing"), and satisfaction ("by salutary satisfaction") (Denz. 146). Moreover, he rejects postponement of penance; he commands that the sacrament be administered in danger of death not only to those who, having lost the use of speech, ask for it by other signs, but also to the unconscious, if it is established that they had previously made a vow or resolution to receive the sacrament (Denz. 147).

GELASIUS I († 496), in the tome "Ne forte," concerning the bond of anathema, about 495, explaining the scriptural words concerning the unforgivableness of sin against the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:32) and sin unto death (1 John 5:16 ff.), teaches that such a sin is only obstinacy in evil, or the unwillingness to repent; but that there is in truth no sin which cannot be forgiven through the power and absolution of the Church ("what you shall loose," "repentant sinners to be released"), founded on Christ's words in Matthew 18:18 (Denz. 167).

COUNCIL OF SENS (1140) condemned the proposition of Abelard teaching that the power of the keys had been given to the Apostles alone, and not to their successors (Denz. 379).

COUNCIL OF VERONA (1184), under Lucius III († 1185), anathematized the Albigensians, who held very erroneous opinions "concerning baptism, or the confession of sins, matrimony, or the other ecclesiastical sacraments" (Denz. 402).

INNOCENT III († 1216), in the profession of faith prescribed for the Waldensians in 1208, teaches that there are seven rites of the Church, which he enumerates under the name of Sacrament and the efficacy of which, he teaches, is not hindered by the unworthiness of the minister; he mentions Penance, through which pardon is granted by God (Denz. 424).

FOURTH LATERAN COUNCIL (1215), under Innocent III, in chapter 1 against the Albigensians and other heretics, speaking of the means of salvation which are in the Church ("outside of which no one at all is saved"), mentions the Eucharist under the name of Sacrament, and likewise enumerates Order, Marriage, and Penance, teaching that through the last a person who has fallen into sin after Baptism "can always be restored" (Denz. 430).

THE SAME COUNCIL, in chapter 21, treats the precept of annual confession, the obligation of satisfaction, a certain restriction in the exercise of the jurisdiction of the sacrament (namely, the need to confess to one's own priest, or to one having his permission), the manner in which the priest must conduct himself in examining the cause and giving judgment and remedy, and the sacramental seal (Denz. 437 ff.).

INNOCENT IV († 1254), Epistle "Sub catholicae," to the Bishop of Tusculum, Apostolic Legate among the Greeks, 6 March 1254, teaches from the words of Matthew 12:32 (concerning sin against the Holy Spirit) that some faults are remitted in this world and some in the world to come, and thus explains the existence of Purgatory (Denz. 3047).

SECOND COUNCIL OF LYONS (1274), under Gregory X († 1276), in the profession of faith of Michael Palaeologus, recalls Penance among the "seven ecclesiastical sacraments" and teaches that those who have fallen after Baptism are not to be baptized again, but obtain remission of sins through true penance (Denz. 464 ff.).

JOHN XXII († 1334), Constitution "Vas electionis," 21 July 1321, teaches that penitential jurisdiction is subject to the power of the Church, condemning the error of John de Polliaco, who said that every one of the faithful is so bound by the nature of the matter itself to confess to his own priest that this obligation cannot be taken away by the Roman Pontiff (by granting another the general faculty of hearing confessions), nor even by God, without implying a contradiction (Denz. 491–493).

THE SAME, Constitution "In agro dominico," 27 March 1329, condemned two errors of Eckhart concerning the nature or object of acts of penance, teaching that true penance consists in conforming one's own will to the divine will permitting sin, and consequently in not wishing that one had not sinned (Denz. 514 ff.).

BENEDICT XII († 1342), in the booklet "Iam dudum," sent to the Armenians in 1341, reproves, among other things, the errors of the Armenians, who said that through confession all punishments are remitted, so that there is no Purgatory; likewise, that priests have no power of remitting sins but only of speaking and declaring (Denz. 535, 538).

COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE (1414–1418), under Martin V († 1431), in session 8 (4 March 1415), condemned Wyclif's seventh proposition denying the necessity of confession (Denz. 587). Likewise, in the bull "Inter cunctas," 22 February 1418, among questions to be proposed to Wycliffites and Hussites, articles 20–22 set forth these truths: that confession is necessary; that priests have the true power of absolving; that the efficacy of this power does not depend on the uprightness of the minister; and that Penance must involve four acts, namely, confession, contrition, satisfaction, and absolution (Denz. 670–672).

COUNCIL OF FLORENCE (1438–1445), in the Decree for the Armenians, offers a brief synthesis of the sacrament of Penance, setting forth its name (Sacrament); its order (fourth); its matter, or quasi-

matter, namely, contrition of heart (sorrow and purpose), oral confession (the complete disclosure of sins), and satisfaction; its form (the words of absolution: "I absolve thee," etc.); its minister (one having ordinary or extraordinary jurisdiction); and its effect (absolution from sins) (Denz. 699).

SIXTUS IV († 1484), in the bull "Licet ea," 9 August 1479, condemned six propositions of Peter de Osma concerning the institution, necessity, and nature of this sacrament, namely: that Penance is a sacrament of nature and not of positive institution; that this sacrament is not necessary for the remission of mortal sins, but that contrition suffices; that the confession of sins in their species is only a matter of ecclesiastical law; that evil thoughts need not be confessed, but are effaced by mere displeasure; that confession is secret and consequently concerns secret sins alone; and that satisfaction must be carried out before absolution (Denz. 724–732).

LEO X († 1521), in the bull "Exsurge Domine," 15 June 1520, condemned ten propositions of Luther concerning the nature of Penance and its effect, of which the sum is as follows: that Penance has three parts, namely confession, contrition, and satisfaction, is without foundation in Scripture and Tradition; that contrition, or the act of penance, involves only a change of counsel or the resolve upon a new life; that neither contrition nor absolution itself remits sin, but only confidence in Christ whereby a man believes that sin is remitted to him, even if he lacks contrition or the priest absolves him in jest, provided that such faith is present; that the integral confession, even of mortal sins, is contrary to the ancient custom of the Church of confessing only manifest sins, and that the desire to omit nothing is a presumption, as though we wished to leave nothing to be forgiven by the divine mercy; and that, with respect to the administration of this sacrament, all Christians (even a woman and a boy) have equal power, and a priest has no more than a layman, nor a bishop and the Pope more than a simple priest (Denz. 745–754).

COUNCIL OF TRENT (1545–1563) completed the whole doctrine of the Church concerning this sacrament, chiefly in session 14 (25 November 1551).

In session 6 (on Justification), chapter 14 (on those who have fallen and their restoration), it gives beforehand a certain complete summary of this sacrament (its institution, necessity, parts, and effect; Denz. 807). Canon 29 defines that a man can be justified again after Baptism, and not otherwise than through the sacrament of Penance (Denz. 839). Canon 30 defines that, after justification has been received through Penance, there still remains a temporal punishment to be discharged either in this world or in Purgatory (Denz. 840).

In session 7 (on the Sacraments in General, Baptism, and Confirmation), it names Penance in the fourth place in the catalogue of the seven sacraments (canon 1 on the sacraments in general, Denz. 844); it defines that a man can lose grace after Baptism, and not only through a sin against faith (canon 6 on Baptism, Denz. 862); likewise, that sins committed after Baptism are not blotted out merely by recalling and believing in the Baptism received (canon 10 on Baptism, Denz. 866).

In session 13 (on the Eucharist), chapter 7 and canon 11 command that sacramental Penance be undertaken beforehand by one guilty of mortal sin, before receiving the Eucharist (Denz. 880 and 893).

Session 14, on the Sacrament of Penance (to which is added the sacrament of Extreme Unction, as "the consummation of Penance"), is divided into nine chapters and fifteen canons (Denz. 894–925):

Chapter 1 and canons 1 and 3: on the necessity and institution of this sacrament; on the existence in the Church of the power of remitting sins, according to the meaning of John 20:22 ff. Chapter 2 and canon 2: on the difference between Penance and Baptism.

Chapter 3 and canon 4: on its parts, or on its form (absolution) and quasi-matter (contrition, confession, and satisfaction); on its fruit or effect.

Chapter 4 and canon 5: on contrition in particular, namely its nature, properties, division into perfect and imperfect, and relation to the sacrament.

Chapter 5 and canons 6, 7, and 8: on confession, namely its necessity, divine institution, object, integrity, usefulness, and secrecy.

Chapter 6 and canons 9 and 10: on the minister and absolution, namely on priests alone as ministers of the sacrament, on the meaning of the words of Matthew 18:18 and John 20:23, on the independence of the power of the keys from the moral probity of the minister, and on the judicial character of this power.

Chapter 7 and canon 11: on the reservation of cases.

Chapters 8–9 and canons 12–15: on satisfaction and works of satisfaction.

CATECHISM OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT, part 2, chapter 5, expounds substantially the same doctrinal points, in much the same order and with greater theological detail, through 79 questions. The following additions, or rather amplifications, are to be noted:

Question 1: An exhortation to frequent exposition of the doctrine of this sacrament.

Question 2: On the meaning of the name Penance.

Questions 3–9: On Penance as a virtue (of which the Council speaks only in passing).

Question 10: On the fittingness of the institution of this sacrament.

Question 11: On the manner in which the general definition of a sacrament is verified in it.

Question 12: On its repeatability.

Questions 17 and 42: On the rite or manner of approaching this sacrament.

Question 19: In what sense certain sins are said to be irremissible.

Questions 24–26: On the word "contrition" and the other terms by which sorrow is designated.

Questions 27–28: Why and in what sense contrition ought to be very great.

Questions 36, 37, and 53: On the fittingness of the institution of confession and its usefulness.

Question 44: At what age or time of year confession is to be made. Question 45: How frequently this sacrament is to be received.

Question 48: An intentionally incomplete confession is not a sacrament but a sacrilege.

Question 52: Confession cannot be made through a messenger or by letters.

Question 54: On the twofold power of order and jurisdiction.

Question 56: On the endowments required in a minister.

Question 57: On the sacramental seal.

Questions 58–61: On the manner of dealing with penitents.

Questions 62–63: On the meaning and various kinds of satisfaction.

Questions 66–79: On various fittingnesses and properties of satisfaction.

PIUS V († 1572), in the bull "Ex omnibus afflictionibus," 1 October 1567, condemned the following errors of Michael Baius: that God alone gives life inwardly, whereas the priest as his minister only absolves from the guilt of punishment (propositions 56–58); that man contributes in no direct manner, through works of satisfaction, to his satisfaction or liberation from punishment (proposition 59); that perfect charity and mortal sin can exist together in man (proposition 70); that perfect contrition does not regularly justify without the actual reception of the sacrament (proposition 71); that satisfactions are of no value toward expiating the temporal punishment remaining after remission of guilt (proposition 77) (Denz. 1056, 1057, 1058, 1059, 1070, 1071, 1077).

CLEMENT VIII († 1605), decree of the Holy Office, 20 June 1602, condemned the proposition teaching that confession or absolution could lawfully take place in the absence of the penitent, namely by letter or messenger (Denz. 1088 ff.).

ALEXANDER VII († 1667), decree of 24 September 1665, among other moral errors, condemned these: that sins omitted in a lawful confession are not required to be accused in the following confession; that the precept of the Church can be satisfied by voluntary confession alone; that a penitent may on his own authority substitute another person to fulfil his penance (Denz. 1111, 1114, 1115).

The same Pope, decree of the Holy Office, 5 May 1667, leaving undecided the much-debated question whether any love of God is required in sacramental attrition, forbade the advocates of either opinion to condemn or abuse the defenders of the contrary opinion (Denz. 1146).

INNOCENT XI († 1689), decree of the Holy Office, 2 March 1679, condemned the following moral errors: that it is probable that a merely honourable natural attrition is sufficient; that the penitent is not bound to disclose, when interrogated by the confessor, a sin arising from some habitual practice; that it is lawful to absolve one who has confessed only by halves, by reason of the great number of penitents; that absolution is not to be denied or deferred when there is no hope of amendment, provided the penitent expresses sorrow and the purpose of amendment with his lips; that one who does not wish to omit a proximate occasion of sin may sometimes be absolved; that a proximate occasion of sin is not to be shunned when some useful or honourable reason for not shunning it occurs; that it is lawful directly to seek a proximate occasion of sin for our own spiritual good or that of our neighbour; that a man may be capable of absolution who is ignorant, even culpably, of mysteries of faith, including the Trinity and the Incarnation (Denz. 1207–1215).

The same Pope, decree of the Holy Office, 18 November 1682, rejected a certain specious distinction concerning the sacramental seal, or the use of knowledge acquired from confession (Denz. 1220).

ALEXANDER VIII († 1691), decree of the Holy Office, 7 December 1690, condemned the following errors of the Jansenists: that every action which does not proceed from supernatural charity is a sin, and therefore that all acts of unbelievers are sins; that hatred of sin conceived from the mere consideration or desire for glory, fear of Gehenna, and attrition conceived from fear without love of

God are likewise sins; that satisfaction, by Christ's law and the very nature of the matter, must precede absolution; that the modern custom of administering Penance is an abuse, however long-standing it may be; that a man is bound throughout his whole life to do penance for original sin; that most confessions made among religious are sacrilegious or invalid (Denz. 1297–1310).

CLEMENT XI († 1721), in the constitution "Unigenitus," 8 September 1713, condemned similar propositions of Pasquier Quesnel: that an action not informed by charity is evil and a sin, and therefore a prayer made and penance performed through fear of punishment are also a new sin; that wisdom and charity require penitents not to be absolved immediately, but that time be granted them to feel their state of sin and to seek the spirit of penance and contrition (Denz. 1395–1412, 1437 ff.).

BENEDICT XIV († 1758), in the brief "Suprema omnium Ecclesiarum sollicitudo," 7 July 1745, condemned, as injurious to the reputation of their neighbour and to the sacrament, the practice or teaching of certain confessors who demanded from penitents the name of an accomplice (Denz. 1474).

PIUS VI († 1799), in the constitution "Auctorem fidei," 28 August 1794, condemning the errors of the Synod of Pistoia concerning the sacrament of Penance (propositions 34–45), teaches: that the Church's custom of administering this sacrament, with the ancient order of canonical penance omitted, is fitting; that penance imposed by the priest and performed after absolution is sacramental and satisfactory; that, for a man to be absolved, a special fervour of charity is not required; that valid absolution requires in the priest the power of jurisdiction; that the rigorist doctrine of the Jansenists, according to which it is expedient to deny absolution to those who have relapsed, on the specious pretext that men may thus be more effectively led to detest and abandon sin, must be rejected; that frequent confession of venial sins is to be commended; that the Church's discipline concerning the reservation of cases is prudent and is not to be changed (Denz. 1534–1545).

PIUS X, decree of the Holy Office "Lamentabili," 3 July 1907, condemned three propositions of the Modernists (propositions 43, 46, 47) concerning the sacrament of Penance: namely, that the sacrament of Penance arose through the evolution of Baptism into two sacraments; that the conception of a sinner reconciled by the authority of the Church did not exist in the primitive Church, but was gradually formed; that the words of John 20:22 ff. do not refer to the sacrament of Penance (Denz. 2046 ff.).

PIUS XI, in the Jubilee bull "Infinita Dei misericordia," 29 May 1924, taught that through Penance there takes place a complete revival of merits (Denz. 2193).

CODE OF CANON LAW, in Title IV, entitled "On Penance," treats both Penance, canons 870–910 (chapters I–IV), and Indulgences, canons 911–936 (chapter V). Canon 870 serves as a kind of prologue, containing the definition of the sacrament. Chapter I: on the priest as minister of the sacrament; on the twofold power of order and jurisdiction; and on the manner in which the power of jurisdiction, whether ordinary or delegated, is obtained (canons 871–892). Chapter II: on the reservation of sins (canons 893–900). Chapter III: on the subject of this sacrament (canons 901–907). Chapter IV: on the place for hearing confessions (canons 908–910).

4. THOSE IN ERROR

EARLIER HERESIES

They may be divided into two classes:

The first class is that of the Montanists, Novatianists, and Donatists (third and fifth centuries), who erred chiefly concerning the extent of the power of the keys, teaching that the Church cannot absolve certain grave sins (in particular the so-called three capital sins, namely idolatry, murder, and adultery), in accordance with Tertullian's Montanist assertion: "Some [sins] will be remissible, others irremissible" (De Pudicitia, 2; M.L. 2, 1036).

Such rigorism arose among the Montanists from a mistaken eschatological idea, or from the conviction that the end of the world and the coming of judgment were imminent (whence they contended that the more serious offences must be left to God's judgment); among the Novatianists, from controversies about the absolution of those who had fallen during the persecution of Decius (whence Novatian himself directly opposed the absolution of apostasy alone); among the Donatists, from the desire to protect their schism under a certain white cloak of purity (for they said that they themselves were pure or cathari, and consequently excluded public sinners irrevocably from their communion).

The principal work of these heretics is Tertullian's book On Modesty (M.L. 2, 1031 ff.); to it may be added two letters of Novatian (not yet openly a heretic, and writing in the name of the Roman clergy) to Cyprian (among Cyprian's letters 30 and 31, M.L. 4, 310–323). These heretics are treated in the writings of Cyprian, Ambrose, Pacian, and Augustine (mentioned above, p. 16), and in the documents of the Roman Council, the Council of Nicaea, and Innocent I (mentioned on pp. 26 ff.).[33]

[33] Among modern scholars, D'Alès writes particularly and critically on this period in the works cited above (p. 19).

The second class is that of the medieval sects which prepared the way for Protestantism, namely the Cathari, Albigensians, Waldensians, Wycliffites, and Hussites; exaggerating the principle of spiritualism in a Manichaean manner, they more directly denied the very existence of the sacrament and of the power of the keys. Their doctrine and condemnation are reported in the documents of the Church cited above (pp. 27 ff.), namely those of the Council of Verona, the Fourth Lateran Council, and the Council of Constance.

Moreover, by these heretics, and most clearly by Wyclif, the following points of Catholic doctrine concerning Penance are directly attacked: that confession is necessary; that the power of absolving does not belong to laymen; and that this power is independent of the moral probity of the minister.

EASTERN SCHISMATICS[34]

Until the seventeenth century there was no notable difference between the schismatics and Catholics concerning the various principal points of the doctrine of Penance, as is also clearly apparent from the three responses which Jeremiah II († 1595), Patriarch of Constantinople, made to the Protestants. In the seventeenth century, however, Cyril Lucaris, himself Patriarch of Constantinople, imbued with a Calvinist education, opened the way for Protestant infiltrations into Eastern theology.

[34] Bibliography. We cited the principal and general works on the sacraments from M. Jugie (*Theologia Orientalium*, vol. 3, *De sacramentis*, Paris, 1930, p. 6) in the treatise *De sacramentis in genere*, Introduction, p. 27 ff. Among other works cited by the same Jugie (ibid., ch. 5, *De Poenitentia*, pp. 331 ff.), the following should be noted: Laurentius Zizanius, *Magnus catechismus*, Moscow, 1627. Gregorius Chiensis, *Σύνοψις τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας δογμάτων*, Venice, 1635. Petrus Moghila, *Trebnik*, Kiev, 1646. Gabriel Petrov (Metropolitan of Petersburg), *Τελετουργία ἱερά*, Petersburg, 1779. Nicodemus, *Ἐξομολογητάριον*, Venice, 1794. Theophilactus (Gerskii), *Orientalis Ecclesiae orthodoxae dogmata*, Moscow

edition, 1831. Callinicus, *Νέον ἐξομολογητάριον*, Constantinople, 1839. Antonius Moschopulus, *Ἐπιτομὴ τῆς δογματικῆς καὶ ἠθικῆς θεολογίας*, Cephalonia, 1851. Sylvester Lebedinskij, *Theologia dogmatica* (Greek translation by Vallianus), Athens, 1858. Anonymous, *Examen statutorum ecclesiasticorum de sacramento paenitentiae*, in *Prav. Sobiesiednik*, 1859, vol. 1, p. 385. I. Novogorodov, *Bogoslovie oblichtitelnoe*, vol. 2, Kazan, 1859, pp. 288–304. Bieliaev, *Doctrina romano-catholica de praetensa satisfactione*, in *Pravoslavnyi Sobiesiednik*, 1876. P. Smirnov, *Expositio christianae fidei orthodoxae*, Petersburg, 1906. Andrutsis, *Δογματική*, Athens, 1907. Malinovskii, *Summa orthodoxae dogmaticae theologiae* (Russian), vol. 2, Sergiev Posad, 1908. Among the works of Catholics on Eastern theology, the following should be noted: J. Morinus, *Commentarius historicus de disciplina in administratione sacramenti Poenitentiae*, Paris, 1651. Goar, *Euchologium Graecorum*, Venice, 1730. Schelstrate, *Acta Ecclesiae Orientalis contra Lutheri Haeresim*, Rome, 1739. H. Denzinger, *Ritus Orientalium*, 2 vols., Würzburg, 1863 ff. J. Pargoire, *L'Église byzantine de 527 à 847*, Paris, 1905. B. Suciu, *De natura medicinali et vindicativa epitimiorum in Ecclesia graeca*, in *Actis II conventus Velehradensis*, 1910, pp. 95–103. A. Bukowski, *Die Genugtuung für die Sünde nach der Auffassung der russischen Orthodoxie*, Paderborn, 1911. M. Jugie, *Theologia Orientalium*, vol. 3, ch. 5, Paris, 1930; *La peine temporelle due au péché d'après les théologiens orthodoxes*, in *Échos d'Orient*, vol. 9 (1906), pp. 321–330. Th. Spacil, *Doctrina theologica Orientis separati de sacramento Poenitentiae*, Rome, 1926. P. Mutzerath, *Busse und hl. Ölung in der byzantinischen Kirche*, Paderborn, 1940. *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, art. "Absolution" (chez les Grecs, cols. 200–205, Michel); art. "Confession" (dans l'Église russe, col. 205, Tolstoï); art. "Confession" (dans l'Église Grecque du IV au XIII siècle, cols. 867–874, Vacandard); art. "Pénitence" (dans l'Église Grecque après le schisme, cols. 1127–1138, M. Jugie).

"Today," writes Jugie, "if you open one of the compendia of dogmatic theology used in the ecclesiastical seminaries or academies of the Greeks and Russians; if you go through their *Symbolics* or *Polemical Theologies*, you will find in them not a little directed against the Catholic doctrine of sacramental satisfaction, and also against indulgences and the treasury of the Church. In the *Symbolics* of Ch. Andrutsis, for example, no fewer than forty pages (out of 350) are devoted to questions of this kind. Macarius Bulgakov, in his *Orthodox Theology*, endeavours over twenty-four densely printed pages to overthrow the Catholic doctrine on these matters. A more recent Russian theologian, by name Malinovskii, accuses the Roman Church of having 'in its doctrine of the sacrament of Penance admitted errors of such a kind as entirely to adulterate the spirit and character of this sacrament.'"[3536]

[35] *Summa orthodoxae dogmaticae theologiae* (Russian), vol. 2, Sergiev Posad, 1908, p. 405.

[36] *Theologia Orientalium*, vol. 3, ch. 5, Paris, 1930, p. 331.

The principal disagreement and error of the Eastern polemicists concerns the Catholic doctrine *on satisfaction*.

"The greater part of the Greek-Russian theologians of our age directly oppose this doctrine. They teach that the whole punishment owed for sin is always remitted through priestly absolution, and therefore that the *epitimia* imposed by the confessor are devoid of all satisfactory power and are directed solely to amendment, paternal correction, and progress in the penitent's virtue."[37]

[37] Jugie, ibid., p. 345.

Lesser disagreements or errors are the following:

As regards the *sacrament itself*, almost Cyril Lucaris alone denies this sacrament along with the Protestants.

As regards the *necessity of confession*, Michael Glycas [twelfth century] "seems to deny it, while he makes his own the following words, which he attributes to Anastasius of Sinai: 'If you can find a spiritual man who can heal you, confess your sins to him; but if you cannot find such a one, confess

to God in private, condemning yourself and saying: God, you know that I alone am a sinner, and unworthy of all pardon; but save me for the sake of your mercy alone.' And he adduces certain examples to prove that sins can be forgiven by confession made to God alone."[38]

[38] Jugie, ibid., p. 336.

As regards the *integrity of confession*, "it should be observed that the dissidents do not care much about it, although there are among them excellent *exomologetaria*, in which various sins are enumerated one by one with their circumstances, and suitable *epitimia* are indicated. Nor are public confessions unknown among the Greeks, especially in schools, by the spiritual father's reading out a certain list of sins; after this has been read, a common absolution is imparted to all the pupils who have declared that they sinned in some way. But these practices are abuses condemned by ecclesiastical authority."[3940]

[39] Cf. C. Korolevski, *L'administration du sacrement de pénitence dans le rite byzantin, Stoudion*, 1925, pp. 36–45, 97–110, 129–136.

[40] Jugie, ibid., p. 336.

As regards *contrition*: "Some attack the distinction between contrition and attrition, nor do they wish to admit that sins are blotted out by perfect contrition together with the desire for the sacrament before priestly absolution; because, they say, the sacrament would then become superfluous and useless, or we should fall into the mere declaration of the Protestants."[41]

[41] Jugie, ibid., p. 337.

As regards the *subject*, modern Easterners ignore the practice of frequent confession and are not concerned with confessing or absolving venial sins.[42]

[42] Compare the material quoted by Jugie (ibid., p. 338 ff.) from Goar, *Rituale Graecorum*, Venice edition, pp. 504–541.

As regards the *minister*, observe that in Russia the "*raskolnikos bezpopovtsos*," who are deprived of priests and renew the ancient error of the Montanists, Waldensians, and Wycliffites, contend that a devout layman can hear confessions and validly absolve from sins.[43] In support of their thesis they adduce certain examples from antiquity and certain texts of older ecclesiastical writers, from which it appears that in the Byzantine Church there was formerly in force the abuse of confessing sins to simple monks who had not received priestly ordination. That this abuse even existed before the separation of the Churches can hardly be called into doubt."[44]

[43] Cf. K. Plotnikov, *Manuale confutationis russici schismatis*, Petersburg, 1897, pp. 227–233.

[44] Jugie, *Theologia Orientalium*, vol. 3, Paris, 1930, p. 362 ff.

As regards the *sacramental seal*, Emperor Peter the Great introduced a grave innovation into the Russian Church in the year 1722, decreeing that the sacramental secret was to be revealed in certain more serious cases of public utility.[45]

[45] Cf. Jugie, ibid., p. 368 ff.

PROTESTANTS[46]

The doctrine of the innovators concerning the sacrament of Penance is the logical consequence of their general view of the sacraments and of their fundamental principle of justification by faith. The

principal points of this doctrine, which can be gathered from the Church's own documents (the Council of Trent and the Bull of Leo X), are reduced to the following:

[46] Bibliography. Luther, *Theses adversus indulgentias* (1517; *Luthers Werke*, Weimar ed., vol. 1, p. 233). *Resolutiones disputationum de indulgentiarum virtute* (which Luther held in 1518 with the Catholic theologians Tetzel and Eck; *Werke*, vol. 1, pp. 239–246; 281–316; 350–374). *Sermo de poenitentia* (1518; *Werke*, vol. 1, pp. 317–324; in this sermon are contained nearly all the propositions condemned by Leo X in the Bull *Exurge Domine*). (There follows Luther's *Apologia* in favour of his doctrine, addressed to Leo X after the condemnation by the Bull *Exurge Domine*; *Werke*, vol. 1, p. 532 ff.). *Assertio omnium articulorum M. Lutheri per bullam Leonis X novissimam damnatorum* (1520; *Werke*, vol. 7, pp. 91 ff., 117, 119). *Adversus execrabilem Antichristi bullam* (1520; *Werke*, vol. 6, p. 595 ff.). *Disputatio J. Eccii et M. Lutheri Lipsiae habita de poenitentia* (*Werke*, vol. 2, p. 359 ff.). *Contra malignum J. Eccii judicium M. Lutheri defensio* (a. 7; *Werke*, vol. 2, p. 645). *Confitendi ratio* (nos. 7–9; *Werke*, vol. 6, pp. 161–164). *De captivitate Babylonica* (on the sacrament of Penance; *Werke*, vol. 6, p. 545). *Articuli Smalkaldici*, part 3, art. 3, nos. 3, 10, 11, 18, 20 (J. T. Müller, *Die symbolischen Bücher der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, Gütersloh, 1898, pp. 312–315, 321). Melanchthon, *Confessio Augustana*, arts. 11, 12, 25, 28; *Apologia Confessionis Augustanae*, arts. 11, 12, 25, 28 (J. T. Müller, op. cit., pp. 41, 53, 63, 164, 168, 169, 170, 172); *Loci communes*, on Penance (*Corpus Reformatorum*, vol. 21, cols. 215–220, 490–495, 877); *Examen ordinandorum* (ibid., vol. 23, cols. 46–48, 54 ff.). Chemnitz, *Examen decretorum concilii Tridentini*, *De contritione*, art. 9; likewise *De satisfactione*, nos. 5, 6, 16. Calvin, *Institutio christiana*, book 3, chs. 3 and 4; book 4, chs. 8 and 19 (*Corpus Reformatorum*, vol. 32, col. 67 ff.). Zwingli, *De vera et falsa religione*, *De clavibus* (*Opera*, vol. 3, Zurich, 1832). Already in the theses defended by him in 1523, he set forth several errors concerning Penance (cf. E. F. K. Müller, *Die Bekenntnisschriften der reformierten Kirche*, Leipzig, 1903, p. 6). *Articuli 39 ecclesiae anglicanae*, arts. 12, 16, 22. Dallaeus, *De Sacramentali seu auriculari Latinorum Confessione*, Geneva, 1661 (Denis de Sainte-Marthe wrote a refutation of this book: *Traité de la confession contre les erreurs des calvinistes*, Lyon, 1685). Gottlieb Spitzel (Theophilus Spizelius), *Selecta doctorum veterum scriptorumque ecclesiasticorum de vera sinceraque ad Deum conversione monumenta et documenta*, Augsburg, 1685. J. Hales, *A tract concerning the power of the keys and auricular confession*, 1709. Pusey, *Entire absolution of the penitent*, Oxford, 1846. Maskell, *An inquiry upon the doctrine of the Church of England upon absolution*, London, 1849. 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Lagarde, the following critical and historical works, radically anti-Catholic: *La discipline pénitentielle dans les écrits de saint Paul*, in *Revue d'histoire et litt. rel.*, 1910; *La pénitence dans les écrits des premières générations chrétiennes*, ibid., 1910; *La pénitence dans le Pasteur d'Hermas*, ibid., 1911; *La pénitence dans Tertullien*, ibid., 1912; *La pénitence*

dans Origène, ibid., 1912; *La pénitence dans saint Cyprien*, ibid., 1913; *La pénitence dans saint Basile*, ibid., 1922; *La pénitence dans saint Athanase*, ibid., 1920; *La discipline pénitentielle en Orient de Denys de Corinthe à Athanase*, ibid., 1922; *Saint Jean Chrysostom a-t-il connu la confession?*, ibid., 1913 et 1914; *La pénitence dans les Églises d'Italie au cours du IV et V siècles*, in *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 1925; *Saint Augustin a-t-il connu la confession?*, in *Revue d'hist. et litt. rel.*, 1913; *La doctrine pénitentielle de Saint Augustin*, ibid., 1921; *Le pape saint Grégoire a-t-il connu la confession?*, ibid., 1912; *La doctrine pénitentielle du pape Grégoire*, ibid., 1922. Compare also his *Histoire des dogmes*, vol. 6. Among Catholics various doctors, especially polemicists, have expounded Protestant doctrines (cf. the works cited above, p. 19 ff.). Compare also the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, art. "Pénitence" (cols. 1050–1073), art. "Absolution" (cols. 214–240), art. "Confession" (cols. 930–942), and the general works of Möhler, Schanz, and Trésal cited in the treatise *De sacramentis in genere*, p. 23.

1. First of all, they pervert the very nature of the *virtue of penance*, by which this sacrament is vivified, saying that true penance consists not in sorrow for sins committed and in the purpose of making satisfaction, but only in a purpose of new life (cf. above, pp. 5–9 ff.).

2. They deny that Penance is a *sacrament*, even in the sense which they themselves attribute to this word. For they retain two sacraments, namely Baptism and the Supper, since they teach that Penance is to be reduced to and confounded with Baptism, and is, as it were, a remembrance or recollection of Baptism itself, insofar as, in the purpose of a new life elicited by the sinner, the act of confidence in Christ is recalled and confirmed, by reason of which Baptism has remitted all sins, even future ones (cf. Council of Trent, sess. 14, canons 1 and 2).

The Anglican Ritualists alone concede to Penance some character of a sacrament, distinguishing between the greater sacraments, or those properly so called (Baptism and the Supper), and the lesser sacraments (the remaining five).

3. Consequently, they teach that the *essence*, or parts, of Penance are not contrition, confession, and satisfaction, but only the sting of conscience, upon recognition of sin, and faith or confidence conceived from the Gospel or from absolution, whereby a person believes that his sins have been remitted to him through Christ (cf. Council of Trent, canon 4).

4. Hence they teach that *contrition*, taken in the Catholic sense as detestation of sin, is not a true act of penance, since genuine penance consists solely in the purpose of a new life; indeed, that contrition which arises from consideration of lost beatitude and fear of damnation (that is, attrition) is not true and useful sorrow, nor does it prepare for grace, but makes a man a hypocrite and a greater sinner (cf. Council of Trent, canon 5).

5. They deny that *confession* is necessary and of divine law, and teach that it arose from human institution and custom, and therefore that its use is free, although it is useful (so especially the Anglicans) for stirring up justifying faith from the remembrance of Baptism received. Consequently, they deny the necessity of integrity in confession; indeed, they add that it is not lawful to confess venial sins, and that it is unfitting to accuse oneself of all sins, even grave ones, as though we wished to leave nothing to be pardoned by the divine mercy (cf. Council of Trent, canons 6, 7, and 8).

6. They particularly attack *sacramental satisfaction*: both because they teach that satisfaction does not belong to the concept of penance, which consists solely in the purpose of a new life; and because they maintain that the whole punishment is always remitted by God together with the

guilt, and hold that the power of the keys was given by Christ for loosing, but not for binding through the imposition of punishments; and because they foolishly accuse the Catholic Church of holding that man, by his own merits and works, is the cause of his own justification (cf. Council of Trent, canons 12–15).

7. Finally, they most strongly oppose the Catholic conception of *absolution*, which consists in a true judicial power of remitting and retaining sins.

They say that this conception arose from a false interpretation of the words of Scripture ("Whatever you shall bind and loose") and from a corruption of the intention of Christ, who did not wish to confer a power of jurisdiction, but only of ministry. This ministry consists in the very preaching of the Gospel and in the evangelical doctrine concerning the remission of sins through faith in Christ; by this preaching a man is made certain that his justification is ratified in heaven. Hence priestly absolution has no judicial or remissive value, but only a declarative value with respect to the remission already accomplished by the faith of the subject. From this it also follows that *not only priests are ministers* of absolution or of declarative power, but all the faithful, each and every one, since the ministry of the word has been committed universally to all (cf. Council of Trent, canons 9 and 10).

The *Jansenists* taught the doctrine of the Protestants concerning *contrition, satisfaction,* and *absolution* in a milder expression, as is evident from the documents cited above (p. 30 ff.) of Pius V against Baius, Alexander VIII against the Jansenists, Clement XI against Quesnel, and Pius VI against the Pistoianists. Moreover, they revived some of the *rigorism* of the ancient Montanists and Novatianists, as is evident from the same documents.

Modern Liberal Protestants and Modernists have attempted to support the doctrines of the innovators with historical inquiries and critical commentaries. In particular, they contend that the primitive Church *did not possess a consciousness of the power of remitting sins* (except, consequently, in the external forum, by absolving sinners whom it had itself excommunicated), but that it gradually acquired this consciousness (cf. the decree *Lamentabili* cited above, p. 31). The concept of *satisfaction*, several of them say with Harnack, was introduced by Tertullian, from whom the juridical conceptions that later began to prevail in the Church took their origin; the concept of *attrition*, however, which belongs to an inferior order of morality and human dignity, was introduced much more recently by the Scotist school.

III. Division of the Treatise

III. DIVISION OF THE TREATISE

Just as in the Eucharist, which is the food and altar of Christ, three interconnected mysteries are proposed, namely the real presence, the sacrament, and the sacrifice, so in Penance, which is God's medicine and tribunal, a threefold truth is disclosed: the *VIRTUE* of penance, the *SACRAMENT*, and the *POWER OF THE KEYS*. These coalesce into a single sacramental reality even more intimately than do the Eucharistic mysteries, inasmuch as the acts of the virtue of penance are themselves the matter, while the judicial power is, in a certain manner, the very form of the sacrament.

And just as in the sacrament of the Eucharist there is something wholly peculiar, from which the whole sacrament is, as it were, dominated—namely the real presence of the body of Christ—so in the sacrament of Penance something entirely new is observed, by which the whole rite is, in a certain manner, vivified: the very virtue of penance, from which proceed the acts constituting the matter of the sacrament and indirectly determining its form.

Hence arises the twofold classical consideration, customary among theologians since Peter Lombard, namely of Penance *as a virtue* and Penance *as a sacrament*. To these some, after St. Thomas, add a third distinct consideration of the *power of the keys*. But as to the way in which the aforesaid twofold consideration is to be arranged, and the present treatise divided, different authors proceed differently.

Some, such as Collet, Perrone, Gihr, Einig, Lercher, Galtier, Tanquerey, and Hervé, following the method inaugurated by Suárez and Lugo, divide the treatise into two parts. The first, which is shorter and takes the form of an introduction, concerns the virtue of penance; the second, to which some add an appended question on the power of the keys, concerns the sacrament itself. In like manner, the treatise on the Eucharist is divided by some into a section on the real presence and a section on the sacrament (to which some add a separate part concerning the sacrifice).

In favour of this division seem to stand both the very nature of the things in question—since the virtue is, absolutely speaking, prior by nature to the sacrament, which is of positive institution—and the authority of Peter Lombard and of the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, which begin with a consideration of the virtue, as well as the practical and speculative usefulness of such an arrangement. The same Catechism puts it thus: "First, one must treat of [penance] as a part of virtue; not only because the faithful people must be instructed by pastors in every kind of virtue, but also because the actions of this virtue furnish the matter with which the sacrament of Penance is concerned; and unless it is first rightly understood what the virtue of penance is, the force of the sacrament must likewise remain unknown."[47]

[47] Part II, chapter 5, question 3.

To this point Lugo says: "The doctrine which concerns Penance has two principal parts: one concerns the virtue of penance; the other, the sacrament of Penance. And indeed, since St. Thomas in the Third Part does not treat of virtues, but of the sacraments, he would not have discussed the virtue of penance except insofar as it was a part of the sacrament of Penance; hence he first treats something of the sacrament in question 84, and afterwards of the virtue down to question 89; but in question 90 he returns to the sacrament, since, being occupied by a happy death, he left the disputation unfinished. Nevertheless, if we have regard to clarity of doctrine, the method of Francis Suárez and of others, who discuss the virtue of penance first and then the sacrament, seems much more convenient. For the former part is wholly independent of the latter and stands to it as a higher consideration, since the virtue of penance can be found without the sacrament, and not conversely; the order of doctrine, however, requires that we begin with the more universal principles."[48]

[48] *Disputationes Scholasticae*, vol. 4, *De Poenitentia* (Prologue), Paris, 1892, p. 362.

Nevertheless, the foregoing three reasons are not of such weight that we should be obliged to depart from the logical division followed by other doctors, such as the Salmanticenses, Billuart, Pesch, Hugon, Billot, Diekamp, and d'Alès, after the example of St. Thomas. According to this division, the consideration of the virtue of penance is subordinated to, and formally interwoven with, the entire

consideration of the sacrament itself, namely on the part of the material element, which is, as it were, informed by the virtue of penance,[49] just as, in the treatise *On the Eucharist*, we logically subordinated and interwove the consideration of the real presence with the consideration of the sacrament itself.

[49] Cf. Salmanticenses, *De Poenitentia*, Prooemium; Billuart, *De Poenitentia*, around the beginning; Pesch, *De Poenitentia*, preliminary observations; Hugon, prologue to the first question on Penance. Scholastic order Chapter Volume Existence I. On the Institution of the Sacrament *I. On the Sacrament and the Virtue* Essence II. On Matter and Form in General *Intrinsic causes* III. On the Virtue of Penance Matter IV. On Contrition *II. On Contrition and Confession* V. On Confession VI. On Satisfaction *III. On Satisfaction and Absolution* Form VII. On Absolution Extrinsic causes *IV. On Extrinsic Causes* VIII. On the Effect and Properties *Final cause* Dispositive and IX. On the Recipient and Minister efficient cause Connected with the X. On the General Power of the Keys sacrament XI. On Indulgences XII. On Ceremonies

The principal reason for this arrangement is that, as we observed in the introduction to the treatise *On the Eucharist* (p. 32 ff.), since the present discussion concerns a sacrament, everything that is disputed about it should be arranged under the rationale and formal nature of the sacrament itself, according to its intrinsic and extrinsic causes.

Moreover, the three reasons that seem to commend the other arrangement yield to the following three considerations. First, the nature of the sacrament, in fact and in the order instituted, precedes the nature of the virtue in the line of a justifying cause, because the virtue does not avail to justify except as a part of the sacrament or by the desire for it. Therefore St. Thomas, treating of virtues in the Second Part of the *Summa*, omits the treatment of the virtue of penance and reserves it for the Third Part, where he treats of the sacrament itself. Secondly, if there were a genuine divergence, the authority of Peter Lombard and of the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* would yield, respectively, to the authority of St. Thomas and of the Council of Trent itself (cf. session 14, chapters 3 and 4). Thirdly, the usefulness appealed to in discussing the virtue before the sacrament does not concern the scientific and theological exposition of this sacrament, as is implied by the words cited, and is clear from the very character of the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, which is addressed to parish priests for the instruction of the faithful.

As for the *power of the keys*, its consideration could indeed be separated to some extent from the consideration of the sacrament, as happens with the notion of sacrifice in the treatise *On the Eucharist*, especially if, with St. Thomas, the power of the keys is taken more broadly, as extending also to the infliction of excommunication and the granting of indulgences. Nevertheless, in point of fact the contrary method is recommended both by the modern character and the demands of this treatise, since from its very beginning it undertakes to defend against Protestants and Rationalists the proper authoritative and judicial character of this sacrament; and also by the inner nature of the matter itself, for the power of the keys and its exercise are necessarily involved in various questions concerning the institution, the form of absolution, the effect of the sacrament, and the minister. They cannot conveniently be separated from these without the danger of repeating many things to weariness. Moreover, the more general treatment of the power of the keys, insofar as it extends also to excommunication and indulgences, is appropriately placed at the end of the treatise, since these matters belong to the sacrament of Penance only by a certain association and connection, just as sacramentals are connected with the sacraments.

ST. THOMAS gives the following general division, which, prevented by death, he was able to carry out only in part:

"Consequently we must consider the sacrament of Penance. Concerning this, we must consider, first, penance itself; secondly, its effect; thirdly, its parts; fourthly, those who receive this sacrament; fifthly, the power of its ministers, which pertains to the keys; sixthly, the solemnity of this sacrament. Concerning the first, two things must be considered:

first, penance insofar as it is a sacrament; secondly, penance insofar as it is a virtue" (prologue to question 84).

"Next we must consider the effect of Penance: first, with regard to the remission of mortal sins; secondly, with regard to the remission of venial sins; thirdly, with regard to the return of sins already forgiven; fourthly, with regard to the restoration of virtues" (prologue to question 86).

"Next we must consider the parts of Penance: first in general; secondly, each in particular" (prologue to question 90, the last question completed by St. Thomas).

Thus the Holy Doctor proceeds in the *Summa Theologica*, which he left unfinished. First, he treats of penance itself (questions 84–85), and first as a *sacrament* in general (question 84: its sacramental character, institution, remote matter, and proximate matter, that is, the acts of the penitent, without however instituting a special question concerning these; its form; and its properties, namely duration and repeatability), then immediately as a *virtue* (question 85; thus St. Thomas completes the moral treatise on virtues begun in the Second Part of the *Summa*, in which he says nothing of the virtue of penance). Secondly, he treats of the *effect* of each (questions 86–89), jointly (as is clear, for example, from question 86, article 6) and only in general (for in the *Supplement*, question 5, article 10, a particular treatment of the effect of contrition and confession is added, which the Holy Doctor would very probably also have treated in the *Summa*). Thirdly, he treats of the *parts*, or proximate matter, in general (question 90). Here the *Summa Theologica* ends. But as is clear from the prologues just cited, the intention of the Holy Doctor was to complete this third question by treating the parts in particular, and thereafter to discuss: fourthly, the recipient; fifthly, the minister and the power of the keys; and sixthly, the solemn rite of public penance. All these he would most probably have treated according to the order and manner in which they are arranged in the *Supplement*.

In the *Supplement*, to the aforesaid three questions treated in the *Summa*, there is added a treatment of the parts of Penance in particular (questions 1–15), namely contrition (questions 1–5), confession (questions 6–9), and satisfaction (questions 10–15); fourthly, of the recipient of the sacrament (question 16); fifthly, of the *power of the keys* and its minister, effect, and recipient, and likewise of excommunication and indulgences, as a certain extension of the power of the keys (questions 17–27); sixthly, of the *ceremonies*, or the rite of public penance (question 28).

Following, then, the general lines of St. Thomas's procedure, according to the logical order of existence, essence, and the various causes, we divide this treatise into twelve chapters, which, on account of the quantity of material, are gathered into four volumes:

Chapter I. On the Institution of the Sacrament of Penance

CHAPTER I

ON THE INSTITUTION OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

The *EXISTENCE* of the rite of Penance and, consequently, its sacramental character are here considered; for both are involved in the question of its institution (Article 1). To that question is added a discussion of the *time of its institution* (Article 2).

The importance of this chapter, especially under its positive aspect, is apparent from the fact that we here undertake to resolve the first of five questions upon which modern theologians particularly insist against Protestantism and theological Liberalism, namely: the existence of a true and judicial power of remitting sins; the extension of that power to all sins; the necessity of subjecting oneself to that power; the ancient penitential discipline; and secret confession.

Article 1. Whether Penance is a true sacrament of the New Law, distinct from Baptism

ARTICLE 1. WHETHER PENANCE IS A TRUE SACRAMENT OF THE NEW LAW, DISTINCT FROM BAPTISM (Q. 84, AA. 1 AND 6)

STATE OF THE QUESTION

The notion of a sacrament involves three things: a sensible rite instituted by Christ and conferring grace. The question concerning the sacramental character of Penance and its distinction from Baptism is easily resolved once the Church's power of remitting sins, and that a judicial power, has been admitted; for the exercise of this power manifestly exhibits in itself the character of a sacrament and its distinction from Baptism.

Hence it is that St. Thomas and the older theologians, presupposing the dogma of the power of the keys, touched upon this question only briefly and lightly. But the Protestant and Rationalist attack upon that fundamental dogma, on which almost the entire doctrine of this sacrament is resolved, compels more recent theologians—and especially modern ones—to establish and vindicate this point from the sources of revelation. Some indeed resolve the two matters in another order and method, so that the question of the institution of the *POWER OF THE KEYS* is placed first, or else postponed or joined to the question of the institution of the sacramental rite. For the existence of some rite for the remission of sins does not necessarily involve the existence or exercise of a properly so-called and judicial power, as is apparent in Baptism; and therefore the matters could be arranged logically in such a way that first the existence of the rite and its sacramental character were established, and then its authoritative and judicial character determined (as, for example, when the minister is considered).

Nevertheless, it is more advisable from the outset of the treatise to settle both questions as though they were one, since they are equally fundamental and mutually dependent; for both are established by the same arguments, and by one contest we meet the same adversaries.

FOUR QUESTIONS, THEREFORE, ARE ASKED IN THIS ARTICLE:

1. Whether there is in the Church a power of remitting sins granted by Christ the Lord.

2. Whether this power is properly judicial.

3. Whether it is also sacramental, so that its exercise consists in a sacrament of the New Law properly so called.

4. Whether this sacrament is adequately distinct from Baptism.

By means of these questions the fourfold aspect of the Protestant heresy, presented by modern Liberals in a more specious and more critical form, is considered separately.

NEGATIVE PART

The first explicit and direct denial of the sacrament of Penance properly so called and of the power of the keys was made by the Protestants. Certain equivalent or indirect denials, especially among some ancient and medieval sects, preceded or prepared it; and the radical and pseudo-critical denial of the Liberals of our time brought it to completion.

The *sum of the error* is this: Christ did not confer on the Church the power of remitting sins properly so called, especially a power reserved to the hierarchy itself; nor, moreover, did He institute any rite ordained to the remission of sins which is distinct from Baptism itself.

1. ERRORS PRECEDING PROTESTANTISM

These errors generally, and at least in some respect, acknowledged that both the hierarchy and the power of the keys existed in the Church, but denied the necessary connexion between the two. The sum of the error is therefore reduced to this: there is in the Church no power of absolving in the strict sense, that is, no determinate authoritative office committed to the Church; but if any power of absolving is found, it must be regarded as a *special charism*, granted by the Holy Spirit to certain holy persons.

The *MONTANISTS* indirectly attacked not only the *extent* but the very *existence* of the power of remitting sins, inasmuch as they attributed it not to the hierarchy but to all spiritual men, and to them alone, or considered it a certain personal charism of the Holy Spirit. It does not matter that they conceded to the hierarchy the faculty of pardoning lighter sins; for, according to Tertullian as a Montanist, this seems to pertain *not strictly to power*, but only "to doctrine and discipline," or to the general office of teaching and governing.

To this effect *Tertullian*, now a Montanist, says in *On Modesty*, 21:

> "Distinguish *between the doctrine of the apostles and their power*. Discipline governs a man; power marks him out; power is one thing, but the Spirit is God. What, then, did [the Apostle] teach? That one should not have fellowship with the works of darkness (Eph. 5:11). Observe what he commands. But who could forgive sins? That belongs to Him alone. 'For who forgives sins except God alone?' (Mark 2:7). And certainly those mortal sins which have been committed against Himself and against His temple; for the offenses which incur guilt against you, you are commanded to forgive even seventy times seven in the person of Peter (Matt. 18:22). Therefore, even if it were established that the blessed apostles themselves had granted any such pardon, for which forgiveness belonged to God and not to man, they would have done so *not by discipline, but by power*. For they also raised the dead and restored the sick to health—things which none but Christ [could do].
>
> "Show me, then, even now, examples of prophetic power [he addresses the author of the Decree of Callistus], and I shall acknowledge your divine power, and then vindicate for you the power of remitting sins of that kind. But if the office of discipline belongs to your lot, and it is

neither by command nor by power but by ministry that you preside, *who are you to grant pardon, who display neither a prophet nor an apostle whose virtue you possess to grant it?*

"But, you say, the Church has the power to forgive sins. This I acknowledge and maintain all the more, I who have the Paraclete Himself saying through the new prophets: The Church can forgive sin, but I shall not do so, lest they commit others besides. What if a pseudo-prophetic spirit had uttered this? Rather, it would have belonged to the subverter to commend clemency, and moreover to temper the rest toward transgression. Or, if [the spirit] also willed this according to the Spirit of truth, then the Spirit of truth can indeed grant pardon to fornicators, but He does not will to do so to the injury of many.

"Now I ask, on what ground do you usurp this right of the Church for your own judgment? If it is because the Lord said to Peter, 'Upon this rock I will build my Church'; and, 'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven'; or, 'Whatever you bind or loose upon earth shall be bound or loosed in heaven' (Matt. 16:18–19), do you therefore presume that the power of loosing and binding has been derived to you, that is, to every Church akin to Peter, although you overturn and alter the manifest intention of the Lord, who conferred this personally upon Peter: 'Upon you,' He says, 'I will build My Church'; and, 'I will give the keys to you,' not to the Church; and, 'Whatever you loose or bind,' not whatever they loose or bind. ... "Thus *nothing concerning the capital sins of the faithful [pertains] to the power of loosing and binding granted to Peter*. If the Lord had commanded him also to forgive the brother who sinned against him seventy times seven (Matt. 18:22), and afterwards to bind—that is, to retain—nothing, except what [had been committed] against the Lord and not against the brother, whom he had offended, [then] a distinction is made beforehand: sins against God are not to be forgiven, while offenses committed against man are forgiven.

"What, then, does this have to do with the Church, and indeed with yours, O psychic [that is, Catholic]? For, according to the person of Peter, this power belongs to spiritual men, either an apostle or a prophet. For the Church itself, properly and principally, is the Spirit. ... *And therefore the Church indeed will forgive sins; but the Church of the Spirit, through a spiritual man, not the Church which is a number of bishops*: for the right and decision belong to the Lord, not to the servant; to God Himself, not to the priest" (*Patrologia Latina* 2, 1077–1080).

Jerome, *Letter* 41, 3 (to Marcella), says of the Montanists: "They close the doors of the Church against almost every sin" (*Patrologia Latina* 22, 476; cf. *Against Jovinian*, II, 3).

Some of the *NOVATIANISTS*, together with their leader Novatian himself, seem to have rejected every power of remitting sins from the Church (cf. Council of Trent, session 14, chapter 1; Denzinger 894). They taught that there was no place for penance for those who had fallen after Baptism; and that the words of John 20:23, "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them," referred to baptismal remission and completed the meaning of the words of Matthew 28:19, "Teach all nations, baptizing them." The words of Matthew 18:18, however, "Whatever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed in heaven," they referred to a certain indulgence and fraternal correction, of which there is question in verse 15 of the same chapter: "If your brother sins against you, go and rebuke him between yourself and him alone."

Thus, according to Epiphanius, *Heresies* 59, 1; Athanasius, *Letter* 4 to Serapion, 13; Pacian, *Letter* 3; and Ambrose, *On Penance* I, 3 (cf. Augustine, *On Heresies* 38; Jerome, *Against Jovinian* II, 3).

Ambrose, On Penance I, 3, 10:

> "But they [the Novatianists] say that, with the exception of the more serious crimes, they grant pardon for lighter ones. Not indeed [so did] Novatian, the author of your error, who considered that penance was to be granted to no one; namely, on the understanding that he should not bind what he himself could not loose, lest by binding he should make men hope for a loosing from him. In this, therefore, you condemn your father by your own judgment, since you make a distinction between sins which you think can be loosed by you, and those which you consider to be without remedy. But God makes no distinction, who promised His mercy to all and granted to His priests the power of remitting without any exception. But let him who aggravates the fault aggravate the penance as well; for greater crimes are washed away by greater tears. Thus neither is Novatian approved, who barred pardon to all; nor are you, who imitate and condemn him, approved: because you lessen the efforts of penance where they ought to be increased; because the mercy of Christ taught that more serious sins must be sustained by greater supports" (*Patrologia Latina* 16, 489 ff.).

Pacian, Letter 3, nos. 11–12:

> "The [doctrine] of the Novatianists ... contains this: that it is not permitted to repent after Baptism; that the Church cannot forgive a mortal sin, indeed that she herself perishes by receiving sinners. ...
>
> "Now how shrewdly you dispose of that passage which I set forth, namely, that power was given to bishops, so that what they bound upon earth should be bound also in heaven! You say that this pertains not to the faithful but to catechumens; that is, that the crimes of people who had yet to be baptized could be loosed or retained. Finally, you join together passages of the two Evangelists so that they appear to be one, and add that what Matthew related less fully John completed. Thus, because in Matthew the Lord had said, 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost' (Matt. 28:19), in John He completed it by saying, 'Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained' (John 20:23). In this way, the loosing or binding would appear to have referred to the nations which were to be baptized, because the former Evangelist spoke first of the nations, while the latter supplied what concerned loosing and binding. What are you saying? Did the two Evangelists report their meanings as halves, each incomplete in itself?
>
> "You say that Matthew wrote, 'If your brother sins against you, go and rebuke him alone, between yourself and him' (Matt. 18:15), and that the Lord immediately added, 'Whatever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed in heaven,' so that it would seem to refer to an offense against a brother. Come now, do you not see that above He says, 'If your brother sins against you,' whereas here He adds, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you shall loose upon earth,' and so forth? The former He commanded to one person; the latter He granted to several. The former is loosed by the one against whom the offense is committed; the latter, however, by the Church. The former is without a priest, without brethren; the latter is obtained by all.

> 'Whatever you shall loose,' He says; He excludes absolutely nothing. 'Whatever,' He says, whether great or small. Notice that below He tells Peter that a sin committed against a man must be forgiven seventy times seven, thereby showing that other sins can be forgiven even once. Nevertheless, whoever sins against Peter injures the Lord, just as He Himself indicates to Samuel: 'They have not made you of no account, but Me' (1 Kings [1 Samuel] 8:7). Therefore that is granted to the Church even once which is commanded to ourselves so many times" (*Patrologia Latina* 13, 1063, 1070–1072).

In the twelfth century, *ABELARD* (†1142), in support of his own opinion and that of other doctors concerning the extinction of this power in unworthy bishops, taught: "That which ... the Lord says to the Apostles, 'Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them,' etc., seems to refer to their persons, and not generally to all bishops, just as what He says to them elsewhere, 'You are the light of the world; and you are the salt of the earth' (Matt. 5:18), or many other things, are to be understood as applying particularly to their persons. For He did not grant equally to their successors that discretion or holiness which the Lord gave to the Apostles; nor did He say equally to all: ... 'But when that Spirit of truth shall come, He will teach you all truth' (John 16:13)" (*Ethics*, ch. 26; *Patrologia Latina* 178, 674).

The *Council of Sens*, in 1140, summarized and condemned this doctrine of Abelard as follows: "That the power of binding and loosing was given only to the Apostles, not to their successors" (Denzinger 379).

In the fourteenth century *WYCLIFFE* (†1384) taught that absolution granted by any priest, even a holy one, was an abuse of power, or a usurpation of that power which belongs to God alone for the forgiveness of sins.[50]

[50] Cf. Thomas Waldensis, *Doctrinale antiquitatum fidei*, I, book 2, ch. 144, Paris, 1521.

Moreover, the indirect denial of the power of the keys which we observed among the Montanists and Novatianists is also found in the teaching of the *Waldensians*, *Fraticelli*, *Wycliffites*, and *Hussites* (cf. Denzinger 424, 486, 488, 584, 670, 671, 672). According to this teaching, the power was made dependent upon the dispositions of the minister, as though it were not properly an office entrusted to the Church, but merely a charism granted to certain persons. Consequently, several Hussites explicitly taught that the power of absolving belongs to all pious and devout members of the faithful, even laymen and women (cf. Denzinger 670).

We said above (p. 35) that, among the *Eastern schismatics*, the Russian *Raskolniks*, the *Bezpopovtsy*, embraced the opinions of the ancient sects concerning the power of pious laymen to absolve sins.

Furthermore, in the Eastern Church, both after the separation and even before it, the abuse of confessing sins to simple monks not invested with the priesthood prevailed for a certain period.[51] Indeed, "it cannot be denied ... that there existed among the monks a certain party which reckoned the power of remitting sins among the spiritual charisms, independently of the power of orders or jurisdiction." A more distinguished patron of this opinion was *Symeon the New Theologian*, author of the *Letter on Confession*, which in certain manuscripts circulated under the name of St. John Damascene.[52]

[51] Cf. J. Pargoire, *L'Église byzantine de 527 à 847*, Paris, 1905, p. 348; Jugie, *Theologia Orientalium*, vol. 3, Paris, 1930, p. 363 ff., who aptly cautions that the extent of abuses of this kind must not be exaggerated beyond measure, as was

done, for example, by the Protestant K. Holl in *Enthusiasmus und Bussgewalt beim griechischen Mönchtum*, Leipzig, 1898.

[52] Found in *M.G.* 95, 283–304.

> "The thesis advanced by Symeon may be expressed briefly in these words: 'The Apostles received from the Saviour the power to remit sins; and they transmitted it to their successors, that is, to the bishops, and to them alone. But in the course of time, when prelates had given themselves up to various vices and fallen into various heresies, divine grace abandoned them, and this power was taken away from such men; and the gift of the Spirit passed to the monks —not, however, to all, but to those alone who excel in holiness of life, whom the gift of miracles marks out and manifests to the faithful, raising them to apostolic dignity.'"[53]

[53] Jugie, *Theologia Orientalium*, vol. 3, Paris, 1930, p. 364 ff.

2. PROTESTANTISM

From a twofold fundamental principle, one ecclesiological and the other concerning sanctification, Protestantism proceeded to overthrow the whole essence of the sacrament of Penance, although it retained certain empty doctrines or penitential formulas. For, having denied the hierarchical constitution of the Church, it radically emptied the power of the keys of its meaning, reducing it to a mere ministry of declaring the remission of sins. And, having established justification by faith alone in Christ, as expressed in Baptism itself, it emptied the rite of Penance of its sacramental character, reducing it to a mere remembrance of Baptism.

The doctrine of the innovators can be reduced to four propositions, which are, as it were, four aspects of one heresy:

a. *There is no power of remitting sins, properly so called, in the Church.*

Such a power cannot be gathered either from the words of Christ in John 20:21–23, which, according to their interpretation of the ancient Church, must be understood of the power of preaching the Gospel, or of the remission of sins through faith in Christ; nor from the ancient discipline of postbaptismal penance, for this directly concerned amendment and correction in the external forum, and only indirectly the purification of conscience itself, insofar as it aroused the subjective dispositions of justifying faith.

Nevertheless, the aforesaid faculty of preaching the Gospel and declaring that sins have been forgiven may improperly be called the power of remitting sins, and in itself belongs indiscriminately to all the faithful, without distinction of age, sex, or any other condition.

The eighth of the twelve propositions submitted to the examination of the theologians at Trent thus summarizes the error of the innovators: "Priests do not have the power of binding and loosing unless they are endowed with the grace and charity of the Holy Spirit; and it is not said that they alone are ministers of absolution, but that all Christians, each and every one, are: 'Whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven,' etc. By virtue of these words they can absolve sins: publicly, indeed, by correction, if the corrected person improves; but secretly, by spontaneous confession" (in A. Theiner, *Acta genuina Concilii Tridentini*, Zagreb, 1874, vol. 1, p. 531 ff.). This proposition is taken, for example, from Luther, *Assertion of All the Articles Recently Condemned by the Bull of Leo X*, no. 10–14 (cf. Denzinger 750–755); *On the Babylonian Captivity*; and Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, III, 4, 21 ff.

The *Council of Trent*, session 14, *On Penance*, canon 3, thus condemns the error of the Protestants: "If anyone shall say that those words of the Lord Saviour, 'Receive the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained' [John 20:22 ff.], are not to be understood of the power of remitting and retaining sins in the sacrament of Penance, as the Catholic Church has always understood them from the beginning, but shall distort them, contrary to the institution of this sacrament, to the authority of preaching the Gospel: let him be anathema" (Denzinger 913).

> "Calvin [in the sense of arousing justifying faith] acknowledges a power of the keys exercised in three cases: namely, when the whole Church, conscious of its sins, collectively asks God for pardon; when someone who, after some offense, has scandalized the Church receives from the Church's ministers testimony of sufficient penance so that he may again be admitted to the Church; and when someone, weighed down in spirit because of his sins, has recourse to the ministers of the Church, who console him and free him from his distress of soul by recalling to his memory the Gospel word concerning the trust to be placed in God's mercy (*Institutes*, III, 4, 14). Thus it is that in this office ministers are said 'to remit sins and loose souls,' because they are 'witnesses appointed by God to certify to consciences the forgiveness of sins' (*ibid.*, 12). Yet this can in no way be called a sacrament, for 'the promise of the keys ... is found only in the preaching of the Gospel, without any difference' whether it be made to many or to one individual (*op. cit.*, IV, 19, 17)."[54]

[54] Galtier, *De Paenitentia*, no. 119, Paris, 1931, p. 81.

b. *Consequently, and a fortiori, the power of the keys is not judicial but merely declaratory.*

The seventh of the aforementioned propositions reads as follows: "Priestly absolution is not a judicial act, but merely a ministry of announcing and declaring that sins have been forgiven to the person confessing, provided only that he believes himself to be absolved, even though he is not contrite, or the priest absolves him not seriously but in jest. Indeed, the priest can absolve him even without the confession of the sinner" (Theiner, *loc. cit.*).

This proposition is taken, for example, from Luther, *Sermon on Penance*; *Assertion ...*, no. 11 ff. (cf. Denzinger 751 ff.); Melanchthon, *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, article 6, no. 8; article 12, nos. 39, 61, 62; and Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, III, 4, 20–23.

The *Council of Trent*, session 14, *On Penance*, canon 9, declares: "If anyone shall say that the sacramental absolution of the priest is not a judicial act, but a mere ministry of pronouncing and declaring that sins have been forgiven to the person confessing, provided only that he believes himself absolved; or that the priest does not absolve seriously but in jest; or shall say that the confession of the penitent is not required for the priest to be able to absolve him: let him be anathema" (Denzinger 919).

c. *Penance is not properly called a sacrament*; that is, it is not a rite instituted for the remission of sins committed after Baptism, whether remission be understood in the Catholic sense of justification *ex opere operato* (for not even Baptism itself is a sacrament in that sense), or in the Protestant sense of justification through faith (in the way that Baptism is a sacrament). For by Baptism all sins, even future sins, are remitted;[55] but Penance lacks the divine institution by which Baptism and the Supper were bestowed, in which the number of sacraments is complete.

[55] Cf. our treatise *On Baptism*, p. 79.

The first of the propositions mentioned above reads: "Penance is not properly a sacrament instituted by Christ for the reconciliation of those who have fallen again after Baptism; nor is it rightly called, according to the fable of the Fathers, the second plank after shipwreck, but Baptism itself is the sacrament of penance" (Theiner, *loc. cit.*).

This proposition is taken from Luther, *On the Babylonian Captivity*; Melanchthon, *Loci communes* (edition of 1522); Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV, 15, 4; IV, 19, 17; and Zwingli, *On the Number and Use of the Sacraments*.

The *Council of Trent*, session 14, *On Penance*, canon 1, thus reports and condemns the same error: "If anyone shall say that Penance in the Catholic Church is not truly and properly a sacrament instituted by Christ our Lord for reconciling the faithful themselves to God as often as they fall into sins after Baptism: let him be anathema" (Denzinger 911).

It should be noted that Melanchthon, in another edition of his work *Loci communes*, and in the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* (article 13; cf. the words which we quoted in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General*, p. 510), reckoned Penance among the three sacraments properly so called (Baptism, the Supper, and Penance). Indeed, Luther himself, at the beginning of his book *On the Babylonian Captivity*, says: "At the outset I must deny the seven sacraments, and for the time being set down only three: Baptism, Penance, Bread"; although toward the end of that same book, retracting or explaining his previous assertion, he adds: "The sacrament of Penance, which I numbered with these two [that is, Baptism and the Eucharist], I said to lack a visible and divinely instituted sign, and to be nothing other than a way and a return to Baptism."

d. *Penance is not a sacrament distinct from Baptism*, but a certain remembrance of Baptism, or a way and return to Baptism, insofar as, from the words of Christ's promise in Matthew 16:17–19; 18:15–18; and John 20:19–23, that faith which justified the man in Baptism is stirred up anew. In this sense, that is, as something one with Baptism and in relation to Baptism, Penance can be called a sacrament properly so called.

Cf. the first of the aforementioned propositions, quoted above. Cf. also the words of Luther just cited.

The *Council of Trent*, session 14, *On Penance*, canon 2, thus reports and condemns this error: "If anyone, confounding the sacraments, shall say that Baptism itself is the sacrament of Penance, as though these two sacraments were not distinct, and that therefore Penance is not rightly called a second plank after shipwreck: let him be anathema" (Denzinger 912).

Likewise, session 7, canon 10 *On Baptism*: "If anyone shall say that all sins which are committed after Baptism are either remitted or become venial through the mere remembrance of and faith in the Baptism received: let him be anathema" (Denzinger 866).

3. MODERN LIBERALISM

The *Rationalists, Liberal Protestants, and Modernists* deny that Christ instituted the sacrament of Penance, or even that the primitive Church possessed this concept; and they explain Catholic dogma chiefly through a certain evolution, as they allege, of the Church from a charismatic into a hierarchical institution, and of its power from a power in the external forum into a power in the internal forum.

This evolution began in the first centuries and was completed in the Middle Ages by the Council of Lateran IV (1215), which decreed the obligation of annual confession.

The doctrine of the Modernists is summed up in the following three propositions condemned by the decree *Lamentabili*:

Proposition 43: "The practice of conferring Baptism upon infants was a disciplinary development, which was one of the causes of the division of the sacrament into two, namely, Baptism and Penance" (Denzinger 2043).

Proposition 46: "In the primitive Church there was no concept of the Christian sinner reconciled by the authority of the Church; but the Church very slowly grew accustomed to such a concept. Indeed, even after Penance had been recognized as an institution of the Church, it was not called by the name of a sacrament, because it was regarded as a shameful sacrament" (Denzinger 2046).

Proposition 47: "The words of the Lord, 'Receive the Holy Spirit: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained' [John 20:22–23], do not in any way refer to the sacrament of Penance, whatever the Fathers of Trent thought fit to assert" (Denzinger 2047).

THE MORE DEFINITE AND DEVELOPED DOCTRINE OF THESE AND OTHER PSEUDO-CRITICS[56] MAY BE REDUCED TO THE FOLLOWING HEADS:

In *Scripture* nothing is contained concerning the sacrament of the keys; for the texts which Catholics adduce either are not historical, or refer to a special charism granted to the Apostles alone (so that several critics, abandoning the exegesis of the older Protestants, frankly admit that the words of Scripture rather favour the Catholics), or do not refer to the sacrament of Penance (cf. proposition 47 of the Modernists, related above).

[56] Applications of this doctrine occur below in the particular questions concerning this sacrament, such as the necessity of confession, the law of the seal, public Penance, and the efficacy of the power of the keys.

The *Fathers* speak of various ways by which a man can obtain the remission of sins, such as prayer, almsgiving, charity, faith, and good works; but concerning a true power of the keys they are silent.

The *primitive Church* was not hierarchical but charismatic; namely, it was governed by the Spirit alone through charisms, or rather through spiritual men, pneumatics and charismatics. In this holy society the remission of sins was thought either not to exist, or to be rare, and otherwise was reserved to God alone; hence there was no place for Penance or, if it ever occurred, the remission of sins was exercised only by spiritual men under divine impulse and by a charism received (cf. the arguments for this opinion below, pp. 126–130).

But as, on the one hand, the hierarchical constitution of deacons, priests, and bishops followed upon the evolution of the Church (by reason of the diminution of charisms), and, on the other hand, the number of sinners increased, there emerged the *power of binding and loosing*, at first in the external forum alone; that is, a penitential discipline was instituted for the sole purpose of excluding certain sinners from the external communion of the faithful, but of retaining them therein under the condition of undergoing a prescribed penalty.

At length, by gradual evolution, this power became the properly so-called *power of the keys*, or of binding and loosing from sins in the internal forum itself, insofar as pious members of the faithful

began to attribute a certain sanctifying force to the merely deprecatory formulas employed by the bishops in the aforementioned penitential discipline, and therefore spontaneously sought from them the interior remission even of secret sins. A particular influence upon this development was exerted by the practice of monks confessing their sins to their own superior or the head of their community.

As this practice became more widespread, ecclesiastical authority began in various places to sanction it in the form of a precept to confess sins, until the Council of Lateran IV (1215) established the universal decree of annual confession.

This doctrine, first devised and disseminated by *Harnack* in his *History of Dogmas*, was adopted and developed by all the Liberal Protestants and Modernists, especially Sohm, Preuschen, Loofs, and H. Koch (an apostate) in Germany; H. Ch. Lea in America;[57] and J. Turmel (an apostate) in France. Their works, together with those of others, were given in the Introduction to this treatise, pp. 37 ff.

[57] These are particularly opposed by Boudinhon, Dohl, Vacandard, Casey, Baumgarten, Batiffol, and Hogan, cited on pp. 20 ff.

Certain modern Catholic historians have approached this same interpretation of the mind of the ancient Church, notably B. Poschmann and K. Adam (in the works cited on pp. 19 and 23 ff.). They concede that the ancient Fathers, at least generally speaking, did not suppose that absolution was properly and directly ordained to the remission of sin itself (in this they agree with the non-Catholic critics), although they concede to it a certain true character and sacramental force (in this they endeavour sufficiently to preserve Catholic doctrine).

According to *Poschmann*, the proper and direct effect of the priest's absolution, in the estimation of the ancients, especially Cyprian (he expressly excepts Augustine), is not the remission of sin itself, but peace and reconciliation with the Church. This, however, does not necessarily and of itself bring about peace with God or the remission of sin, since that is the effect of satisfaction offered to God by the sinner himself or by other members of the Church, especially by the "confessors." Nevertheless, although absolution does not directly bring about the remission of sin, it places the penitent in those conditions in which, through his own satisfaction or that of others, he can work for his salvation or obtain directly from God the remission of sins; for it incorporates him into the Church, in which alone satisfaction can be made and salvation and remission obtained. Consequently absolution is truly sacramental, that is, by reason of its indirect consequences for the remission of sins, because it irrevocably places the penitent in the aforesaid conditions of salvation.

According to *Adam*, the proper and direct effect of absolution, in the estimation of the Fathers, including Augustine himself (in this he differs from Poschmann and is directly opposed by him), is not the remission of sin but of punishment, insofar as by absolution the Church declares the satisfaction rendered by the penitent to be sufficient. Since, however, the penitent thereby obtains remission of the divine debt itself and of sin, absolution has, indirectly and consequently, the effect of remitting sin, and is truly sacramental.

Among dogmatic theologians, *Diekamp* thus explains and approves Poschmann's opinion:

> "For the proper understanding of the documents of the early Church, the opinion proposed by B. Poschmann (*Poenitentia secunda*, Bonn, 1940), supported by excellent reasons, is of great importance. According to this opinion, reconciliation, in the view of the doctors of that time, does not immediately or in the name of God blot out sins. The Church herself does not

pronounce the sentence remitting sin. She immediately remits only the penalties which she herself has imposed. Nevertheless, ecclesiastical and divine reconciliation are intimately connected. First, ecclesiastical reconciliation is a condition of divine reconciliation, based on the fact that the Church, by the will of God, is necessary for salvation (Cyprian, *Letter* 57, 1). Secondly, reconciliation with God can certainly be expected if the penitential works of the sinner, which the Church requires and directs, together with the power of priestly supplication, suffice to appease the justice of God. God will then 'confirm' the judgment of the Church (Cyprian, *Letter* 55, 18) and 'carry it into effect' (Dionysius of Alexandria, *Letter to Conon*). Thirdly, there are many statements of the doctors of the ancient Church from which it may be gathered that reconciliation possessed sacramental power. Tertullian, for example, asserts that in reconciliation through the Church Christ prays and obtains pardon as an intercessor with the Father (*On Penance* 10, 6). Moreover, the sinner, from the fact that he once again belongs to the Church by virtue of reconciliation, can obtain eternal salvation. Ecclesiastical reconciliation is for him a 'pledge of life' (Cyprian, *Letter* 55, 13). He who receives ecclesiastical peace receives the Spirit of the Father (*Letter* 57, 4), a 'participation in the Holy Spirit' (*Didascalia* II, 41, 2), and is declared a 'participant in divine grace' (Dionysius, *loc. cit.*). Sacramental effects are openly attributed to reconciliation."[58]

[58] *Theologia Dogmatica* (revised by A. Hoffmann), vol. 4, § 52, Paris, 1946, pp. 354 ff.

The foregoing doctrine of the critics is clearly set forth by E. Vacandard, in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, article "Absolution," columns 229–240, and by P. GALTIER in the treatise *De Poenitentia*, no. 121, and in the work *L'Église et la rémission des péchés*, Paris, 1932, pp. 7–19, where he writes:

"The doctrine [concerning the power of remitting sins] having thus been defined more precisely, the question nevertheless arises of its antiquity or origin. Is this conception of a priestly intervention directly tending toward the remission of sin expressed with sufficient clarity in the first centuries for it to be attributed, just as it stands, to the Church of that period? Or must one rather see in it a conclusion whose progressive development only at a late date compelled men's assent?

"The problem we have just stated increasingly commands attention, because many historians consider it resolved in favour of the second hypothesis of which we have spoken. According to them, the earliest scholastics, when they refused to attribute the remission of sin to absolution itself, were adhering to, or returning very precisely to, the line of thought proper to the Church of the first centuries. The Penance administered by her would, at first and for a long time, have possessed in her eyes only the value of a disciplinary measure.

"In reconciling penitents after the fact, she would never have contemplated herself remitting their sins; her absolution would have had as its sole end and object to restore them to her 'peace,' and thus to put them once again in possession of the spiritual advantages which they could find in her communion. If there was sometimes a question, in this connection, of a remission of sin, it was only in the sense of a remission of the penalty with which the Church herself had struck the sinner. Sin, as such, escaped her proper action: God alone forgave it.

"This interpretation of the Church's penitential ministry does not always rest solely upon the documents. In the case of several writers, it follows above all from the preconceived notion of

the Church as a 'society of saints.' The thought of admitting anew into her communion a believer who had fallen from the state of 'holiness' in which Baptism had established him would at first have been entirely foreign to her. It was only by becoming secularized, and under the pressure of the increasingly numerous failings of her members, that she would have resigned herself to adopting a system of penalties, at the cost of which the advantage of belonging to her might be recovered. Thus the practice of ecclesiastical Penance would have arisen, at the earliest, about the middle of the second century.

"From that period, in a form which it is impossible to specify, the documents attest the existence and functioning of this Penance. They do not, it is true, allow us to determine exactly its purpose and scope. Of the texts in which the Church's thought is revealed in the exercise of her penitential ministry, the oldest remaining to us date from Tertullian and St. Cyprian; but these seem to the very historians of whom we are speaking to attest a conception of Penance fully conformable to that which they had conjectured to be the conception of the primitive Church herself. Thus do they believe themselves authorized to present it as solidly established by history. Despite some disagreements of detail about the authors or the precise moment at which another conception of Penance seems to begin to emerge, they are unanimous in maintaining that, at the beginning of this institution, the Church did not propose thereby to remit sin herself. By restoring her communion to penitents she indeed intended to open to them anew the path of salvation and to permit them again to participate in her spiritual goods. But the reach of her absolution went no farther: just as she left to the sinner the whole burden and the whole merit of obtaining the pardon of his faults, she reserved to God the power of remitting them.

"This thesis is the basis of the evolution of the Church as HARNACK conceived and popularized it in his *History of Dogmas*. The Church, ceasing to be the society of saints, becomes a mere institution of sanctification. Her religious character consists in being the indispensable condition of salvation; she alone can guarantee the possibility of it. This is why, to be saved, one must be at peace with her; on her part, definitively to refuse her peace to someone would be to declare him excluded from divine pardon. But to be received again into her communion is in no way a presumption that one is in a state of holiness. When she grants pardon to the sinner, she reconciles him in substance only with herself, and she by no means suppresses [*beseitigt*] sin itself. Strictly speaking, she can only say that the certainty [previously possessed] of no longer being able to be saved has ceased. Such is the sense in which she sanctifies: an institution of morality, she teaches the means of salvation and administers the divine virtues in the place and stead of Christ.[59]

[59] *Dogmengeschichte*, vol. I, book 1, part 2, ch. 3, 4th ed., 1909, p. 445. See also *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*, vol. I (1924), pp. 139 and 235.

"The American LEA (*Auricular Confession and Indulgences*, vol. I) expounds the same conception. The Church placed a high value on the recovery of her communion; but she by no means promised that this reconciliation, however dearly obtained, included absolution or pardon on the part of God (p. 31). The imposition of hands administered in this way merely readmits the sinner into the Church and has nothing to do with his relations with God (p. 51; likewise p. 113).

"The same theory underlies the conception of LOOFS, *Leitfaden zur Dogmengeschichte*, § 29, 2b. The purpose of *exomologesis* is to obtain anew, as legitimately belonging to the community (*als vollberechtigte Glieder*), the sinners whom their Penance has reconciled with God (p. 206). R. SEEBERG likewise characterizes absolution as the 'peace of the Church,' and denounces as an innovation the claim of priests, in the time of St. Cyprian, to control the pardon granted to martyrs.[60]

[60] *Dogmengeschichte*, vol. I, pp. 500–501.

"But the theory is above all firmly stated and generalized among writers—sometimes formerly Catholic—who are pleased to exhibit the opposition between present Catholic doctrine and that which they believe must be attributed to the Church of old.

"Thus TURMEL, who, under the signature Vanbeck, claimed to summarize St. Cyprian's thought on reconciliation as follows: 'He does not remit sins. On this point Cyprian is explicit. ... The Church can do nothing for sins committed after Baptism; only expiation, the satisfaction accomplished by Penance, can purify the Christian sinner and obtain for him the pardon of his faults. He has already been purified when he presents himself before the bishop to make the *exomologesis*; in any case, he presents himself as such and does not ask to be purified by the bishop, who, for his part, supposes him already pure, without concealing that he may be deceived. What, then, does reconciliation do—or, what comes to the same thing, the imposition of hands? It lifts excommunication. The bishop had excluded the sinner from the society of the faithful; he reincorporates him. He had withdrawn his right to communion; he restores it to him. In the first case he acted by virtue of the power of binding; in the second he acts by virtue of the power of loosing' (*La pénitence dans saint Cyprien*, in *Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuses*, 1913, p. 435). ...

"HUGO KOCH, on his side, is scarcely less radical in Germany. He also is as radical as possible in excluding a genuine absolution of the sinner by the Church in the first centuries. Starting from the fact, which he believes established, that the remission of sin is caused by the sinner's personal expiation, he concludes that one cannot speak of a sacrament of Penance in the sense in which one understands it today: 'The remission of the fault being merited by the expiation of the penalty (*durch die Abbüssung der Strafe*), reconciliation with the Church is not an absolution in the later dogmatic sense, but only the conclusion (*die Beendigung*) of the ecclesiastical penalty. God, as is supposed, has Himself already remitted the sin' (*Cyprianische Untersuchungen* [1926], p. 282 and pp. 249–252). He maintained this conclusion in 1928 in his review of Poschmann's work (*Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 1928, p. 496), whom he opposed as a matter of course, whatever principles and facts he accepted from him.

"This conception of ecclesiastical Penance has indeed imposed itself even upon Catholic scholars. Except when trying to preserve nevertheless its sacramental value, they have thought themselves obliged to admit that absolution, in the mind of most of the ancient doctors, did not have as its purpose the remission of sin at all.

"Already in 1913 the alleged Vanbeck (*loc. cit.*, p. 435, note) took pleasure in observing that Adam (*Theologische Revue*, 1909, p. 183) and Poschmann (*Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, 1913, p. 253), despite their apologetic preoccupations, make complete admissions on this

point. H. Koch (*Cyprianische Untersuchungen*, p. 249, note) even emphasizes agreement on the fundamental fact between Adam, Poschmann, and Vanbeck.

"The agreement, it is true, is not complete; and as regards KARL ADAM or BERNARD POSCHMANN, it does not extend to all Christian antiquity. Yet both also dispute that the Church at first attributed to her absolution the remission of sin itself.

"Poschmann had at first believed himself obliged to admit this in 1908 in his *Sichtbarkeit der Kirche nach der Lehre des hl. Cyprian*, p. 154 ff.; but observations made to him in this matter by K. Adam in the *Theologische Revue* of 1909, p. 182 ff., led him to modify his first views. From 1913, in an article in the *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, p. 245, he conceded to his opponent that, as regards the proper and direct effect of priestly absolution in the thought of St. Cyprian, it never produces the pardon of sin. Even when regularly and validly granted, the peace of the Church does not bring about, properly speaking, the remission of sin by God. That remission is always only the effect of expiation or satisfaction offered by the sinner himself or by those members of the Church in general, the 'confessors' in particular, who grant him the assistance of their works or prayers.

"It was the declaration thus made of having abandoned his first opinion that caused Poschmann to be cited by Vanbeck and H. Koch as rallying to their fundamental conception. From then onward, however, he persisted in asserting that St. Cyprian still retained for absolution a *truly sacramental value*. Although it does not remit sin, it nevertheless incorporates the sinner into the living body of the Church; it makes him a participant in the divine Spirit and separates him from those excluded from salvation; by this fact, therefore, it is to be placed on a level with Baptism. Moreover—and herein it appears sacramental—it produces these effects of itself; for, once granted, if it has been given by one having the power to give it, it is irrevocable (*ibid.*, pp. 261–262). ...

"The conception thus attributed to St. Cyprian, M. Poschmann regards as that of the ancient Church in general. Only St. Augustine seems to him to have enriched and specified it in the sense of a real action of the Church in the remission of sin. On this point he has from the beginning, and has always, disputed the conclusions then accepted by M. K. Adam.

"The latter had believed he ought to affirm that, in the eyes of the Bishop of Hippo, the Church, in reconciling the penitent, merely declared officially that the satisfaction accomplished was sufficient. Absolution, according to him, would have directly concerned only the obligation of doing Penance. Indirectly alone, and by way of consequence, it would also have procured a remission of the debt contracted toward God, and therefore of sin itself. In fact, then, that to which the Church's absolution was reduced was what the School would later call the *reatus poenae*.

"One recognizes Seeberg's theory. For St. Augustine, M. Poschmann judges it absolutely insufficient. It appears to him to misconstrue the real efficacy attributed by Augustine to the reconciliation of the sinner. His conception, on the contrary, is that the Church, by restoring her communion to the sinner, herself looses him from the bonds of sin. The Bishop of Hippo does not conceive that one should remit the debt without also, or first, remitting the fault. For him the peace of the Church is not merely the condition; it is also the cause of the remission

of sin. From this point of view, St. Augustine rather anticipates the sacramental doctrine destined to prevail later in the Church. But he alone, among the ancient doctors, would have advanced so far, and the special place assigned him by M. Poschmann in this matter accords well with the view that he considers the common thought of antiquity to have remained far short of this. "And, in fact, his ultimate conclusion is that in the West for a long time men saw in the absolution granted to the sinner only the remission of the excommunication or Penance inflicted by the Church. This does not mean that the sacramental effect did not take place; on the contrary, conditioned then, as today, by confession and satisfaction, its efficacy is not confined to this world; it also has regard to the eyes of God and entails for the sinner the happiest spiritual consequences.

"By incorporating him anew into the living body of Christ, it makes him return to participation in the Holy Spirit; by this fact one may say that it procures for him what has since been called sanctifying grace. But to regard it, as was done then, as the remission of sin understood as reconciliation with God and as the remission of the penalties due to the fault would be to say that the Church claimed to grant it herself. This negative aspect of justification to be recovered after Baptism was placed to the proper account of the satisfaction offered by the sinner. The 'supplications' of the priests aided therein or were even required; but they acted in this only as 'supplications,' and their efficacy was not of a different order from that of the prayers offered by the faithful themselves on behalf of penitents. ...

"[M. Poschmann] therefore agrees with the historians cited in the first place in disputing that ... [absolution] was conceived as having any direct bearing upon sin. The Church, in short, while attributing to herself the power to remit sin, did not for a long time believe that this was the proper object of her absolution.

"This theory, consequently, however akin it may be to that of the ancient scholastics, is far more radical than theirs. They recognized in absolution the power to loose the bonds resulting from sin, properly speaking. The penalty—or the portion of penalty—the direct remission of which they attributed to it was a penalty inflicted by God. Even while recognizing in it only a declarative power, they still allowed it a certain influence upon the divine order: how else explain that the priest's word can guarantee the pardon of God? Here, on the contrary, in relation to sin, its proper power remains confined wholly to the strictly ecclesiastical order: in default of personal satisfaction, alone capable of effacing sin itself, the reconciliation granted to the sinner, however well disposed, would never have been regarded as reconciling him with God. By restricting the direct effect of absolution to the removal of excommunication or to the remission of the bonds imposed by the Church, one excludes its attaining by itself anything that could be called of divine origin: sin, as sin, therefore escapes it completely.

"Such radicalism makes the theory difficult to reconcile with that which the Catholic Church presently professes."

POSITIVE PART

Theological note.

The matter is *de fide*, defined several times, especially by the Council of Trent, in accordance with its four parts (namely: a true power of remitting sins, and not merely of preaching the Gospel or

declaring sins to have been remitted; a judicial power; a true sacrament; and a sacrament distinct from Baptism).

Furthermore, it is *de fide* defined that the power of remitting sins pertains to the Church as hierarchical, and not to all and every one of the faithful, and that this is contained in the very words of Matthew 18:18 and John 20:23 (Council of Trent, canon 10; it is not, however, defined that this is deduced from these words alone, without recourse to the sense of Tradition); likewise, that in Matthew 18:18 and John 20:23 the question concerns a true power of remitting sins (canon 10; it is not, however, defined that this is deduced from the words themselves, nor that these words refer solely to post-baptismal remission).

It is *theologically certain* that the institution of the sacrament of Penance is contained especially in the words of John 20:23 (this is expressly taught in chapter 1 and, in a certain indirect manner, in canon 3); and that from those very words it can also be inferred that Christ conferred the power of remitting sins committed after Baptism (chapter 1: "by words so clear").

Documents of the Church.

All the earlier documents presuppose the penitential power of the Church (those reported in the Introduction, p. 26 ff., and cited in their proper places), from the decree of Callistus to Leo the Great († 461), which prescribe that the fallen are to be admitted to reconciliation. Whether, however, these documents concern reconciliation in the internal forum itself, or the remission of sins properly so called, is evident from what is to be said in the Conclusion on Tradition, by which the true sense of these documents of the Church is rightly discerned.

In the later documents the various points of doctrine pertaining to the sacrament of Penance are expressly set forth (cf. above, the State of the Question), namely:

Divine institution: Leo the Great, Gelasius I, Council of Sens, Sixtus IV, Council of Trent, session 7, On the Sacraments in General, canon 1; session 14, chapters 1 and 6, canon 10.

Meaning of Matthew 18:18: Gelasius I, Council of Trent, session 14, chapter 6 and canon 10; and *of John 20:23:* Council of Trent, session 6, chapter 14; session 14, chapters 1 and 6, canons 3 and 10; Pius X.

Power of binding and loosing: Leo the Great, Gelasius I, Council of Sens, Innocent III, Fourth Lateran Council, John XXII, Benedict XII, Council of Constance, Council of Florence, Leo X, Council of Trent, Code of Canon Law.

Judicial power: Fourth Lateran Council, Council of Constance, Leo X, Council of Trent, session 14, chapters 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, canons 9 and 11, Code of Canon Law.

Designation as a sacrament: Council of Verona, Innocent III, Fourth Lateran Council, Second Council of Lyons, Council of Constance, Council of Florence, Council of Trent, Pius X, Code of Canon Law.

Distinction from Baptism: Leo the Great, Council of Verona, Innocent III, Fourth Lateran Council, Second Council of Lyons, Council of Constance, Council of Florence, Council of Trent, session 14, chapters 1 and 2, canon 2, Pius X, Code of Canon Law.

LEO THE GREAT, Epistle "Sollicitudinis quidem tuae," to Theodore, Bishop of Forum Julii, 11 June 452: "The manifold mercy of God so comes to the aid of fallen humanity that the hope of eternal life is restored not only through the grace of Baptism but also through the medicine of Penance, so that

those who have violated the gifts of regeneration, condemning themselves by their own judgment, may attain the remission of their offences. Thus the assistance of divine goodness has been ordained in such a way that the pardon of God cannot be obtained except through the supplications of priests. For 'there is one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus' [1 Tim. 2:5], who has handed down this power to the rulers of the Church, that they may assign the action of Penance to those who confess, and admit those who have been purified by salutary satisfaction to the communion of the sacraments through the door of reconciliation" (Denz. 146).

GELASIUS I, letter "Ne forte," about 495: "There is indeed no sin for which the Church does not pray for remission, or from which, through the power divinely given her, she cannot absolve those who abandon it, or release penitents. To her it is said: 'Whatsoever you shall forgive upon earth ...' [cf. John 20:23]; 'whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven' [Matt. 18:18]. In these words 'whatsoever' includes all things, however great and of whatever kind they may be, while the true force of those words remains, according to which one who persists in these sins is declared never to be loosed, but not one who afterward withdraws from them" (Denz. 167).

COUNCIL OF SENS, in 1140, cited in the Negative Part, p. 49.

COUNCIL OF VERONA, in 1184, cited in the Introduction to the treatise, p. 27.

INNOCENT III, Epistle "Eius exemplo," to the Archbishop of Tarragona, 18 December 1208: "The sacraments ... even though administered by a sinful priest ... we in no way reject ... because the wickedness of a bishop or priest does no harm to the Baptism of an infant, nor to the Eucharist consecrated, nor to the other ecclesiastical offices celebrated for those subject to him. We therefore approve the Baptism of infants. ... And we believe that pardon is granted by God to penitent sinners" (Denz. 424).

FOURTH LATERAN COUNCIL, 1215, chapter 1, *On the Catholic Faith*, against the Albigensians, cited in the Introduction to the treatise, p. 27 ff.

The same council, chapter 21, *On the Confession to Be Made*: "Every faithful person of either sex, after reaching the years of discretion, must faithfully confess all his sins at least once a year to his own priest, and must strive, according to his strength, to fulfil the penance enjoined upon him, reverently receiving the sacrament of the Eucharist at least at Easter, unless perhaps, on the advice of his own priest, for some reasonable cause he judges that he should abstain from receiving it for a time. Otherwise, while living, let him be barred from entering the church, and, when dead, let him be deprived of Christian burial. Wherefore let this salutary ordinance be frequently published in the churches, lest anyone assume the veil of ignorance as a pretext for excuse.

"But if anyone for a just cause wishes to confess his sins to another priest, let him first ask for and obtain leave from his own priest; otherwise the other priest cannot loose or bind him. Let the priest, moreover, be discreet and cautious, so that, in the manner of a skilled physician, he may pour wine and oil upon the wounds of the injured man [cf. Luke 10:34], diligently inquiring into the circumstances both of the sinner and of the sin, whereby he may prudently understand what counsel he ought to give him and what kind of remedy to apply, making use of various means in order to save the sick man.

"Let him, however, take every care not to betray the sinner in any way, by word or sign or any other means. But if he needs wiser counsel, let him seek it cautiously without in any way identifying the person; for whoever presumes to reveal a sin disclosed to him in the penitential judgment, we decree that he is not only to be deposed from the priestly office, but is also to be confined in a strict monastery to perform perpetual penance" (Denz. 437 ff.).

SECOND COUNCIL OF LYONS, 1274, Confession of Faith of Michael Palaeologus: "[The Roman Church] teaches that those who fall into sins after Baptism are not to be baptized again, but are to obtain pardon for their sins through true Penance. ... She holds and teaches ... that there are seven ecclesiastical sacraments, of which one is Baptism ... another is Penance" (Denz. 464 ff.).

JOHN XXII († 1334), cited in the Introduction to the treatise, p. 28.

BENEDICT XII, the booklet "Iam dudum" sent to the Armenians in 1341: "Others, however, say that the bishops and priests of the Armenians do nothing toward the remission of sins, either principally or ministerially, but that God alone forgives sins; nor are bishops or priests employed to effect the said remission of sins, except because they themselves have received the power of speaking from God, and therefore, when they absolve, they say: 'May God forgive you your sins'; or: 'I forgive you your sins on earth, and may God forgive you in heaven'" (Denz. 538).

COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE, Bull "Inter cunctas," 22 February 1418: "Whether he believes that a priest, in the cases permitted to him, can absolve a sinner who has confessed and is contrite from sins, and enjoin penance upon him. Likewise, whether he believes that a bad priest, with the requisite matter and form and with the intention of doing what the Church does, truly consecrates, truly absolves, truly baptizes, and truly confers the other sacraments" (Denz. 671 ff.).

COUNCIL OF FLORENCE, Decree for the Armenians: "The fourth sacrament is Penance, whose quasi-matter consists in the acts of the penitent, which are divided into three parts. The first is contrition of heart, to which it belongs that he sorrow for the sin committed, with the purpose of not sinning henceforth. The second is confession of the mouth, to which it belongs that the sinner confess completely to his priest all the sins of which he has remembrance. The third is satisfaction for sins according to the judgment of the priest, which is accomplished especially by prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. The form of this sacrament is the words of absolution which the priest utters when he says: 'I absolve thee,' etc.; and the minister of this sacrament is a priest possessing the authority to absolve, whether ordinary or by commission from a superior. The effect of this sacrament is absolution from sins" (Denz. 699).

COUNCIL OF TRENT.

We have seen the order of its sessions in the Introduction to the treatise (p. 29). The following passages bear more particularly upon the present matter:

Session 6, chapter 14, On Those Who Have Fallen and Their Restoration: "Those who by sin have fallen away from the grace of justification received may be justified again, when, moved by God, they endeavour through the sacrament of Penance, by the merit of Christ, to recover the grace they have lost. For this manner of justification is the restoration of the fallen, which the holy Fathers aptly called the second plank after the shipwreck of lost grace. For Christ Jesus instituted the sacrament of Penance for those

who fall into sins after Baptism, when He said: 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained' [John 20:22–23].

"Hence it must be taught that the penance of a Christian man after his fall differs greatly from that of Baptism, and that it includes not only a cessation from sins and a detestation of them, or 'a contrite and humbled heart' [Ps. 50:19], but also the sacramental confession of those sins, to be made at least in desire and in its own time, and priestly absolution; likewise satisfaction by fasts, alms, prayers, and other pious exercises of the spiritual life—not indeed for the eternal punishment, which is remitted together with the guilt by the sacrament or by the desire of the sacrament, but for the temporal punishment, which, as the sacred writings teach, is not always wholly remitted, as it is in Baptism, to those who, ungrateful for the grace of God which they have received, have 'grieved the Holy Spirit' [cf. Eph. 4:30] and have not feared to 'violate the temple of God' [1 Cor. 3:17]. Of this penance it is written: 'Remember whence thou art fallen, and do penance, and do the first works' [Apoc. 2:5]; and again: 'The sorrow that is according to God worketh penance steadfast unto salvation' [2 Cor. 7:10]; and again: 'Do penance' [Matt. 3:2; 4:17]; and: 'Bring forth fruits worthy of penance' [Matt. 3:8]" (Denz. 807).

Ibid., canon 29: "If anyone says that one who has fallen after Baptism cannot rise again through the grace of God; or that he can indeed recover the justice lost, but by faith alone, without the sacrament of Penance, as the holy Roman and universal Church, taught by Christ the Lord and His Apostles, has hitherto professed, observed, and taught: let him be anathema" (Denz. 839).

Session 7, canon 1, On the Sacraments in General: "If anyone says that the sacraments of the New Law were not all instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, or that there are more or fewer than seven, namely Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Order, and Matrimony; or even that any one of these seven is not truly and properly a sacrament: let him be anathema" (Denz. 844).

Ibid., canon 10, On Baptism: "If anyone says that all sins committed after Baptism are remitted or made venial by the mere remembrance of, and faith in, the Baptism received: let him be anathema" (Denz. 866).

Session 14, chapter 1, On the Necessity and Institution of the Sacrament of Penance: "If all the regenerate had such gratitude toward God that they constantly preserved the justice received in Baptism by His beneficence and grace, there would have been no need for another sacrament to be instituted for the remission of sins besides Baptism. But because 'God, who is rich in mercy' [Eph. 2:4], 'knoweth our frame' [Ps. 102:14], He has provided a remedy of life even for those who afterward have delivered themselves into the servitude of sin and the power of the devil, namely the sacrament of Penance, whereby the benefit of Christ's death is applied to those who have fallen after Baptism.

"Penance was indeed necessary at all times for all men who had defiled themselves with any mortal sin, in order to obtain grace and justice—even for those who desired to be washed by the sacrament of Baptism—so that, casting away and amending their perversity, they might detest so great an offence against God with hatred of sin and pious sorrow of soul. ... Moreover, Penance was not a sacrament before the coming of Christ, nor is it one after His coming for anyone before Baptism. But the Lord instituted the sacrament of Penance principally when, raised from the dead, He breathed upon His disciples, saying: 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained' [John 20:22 ff.].

"By so outstanding an act and by words so clear, the consensus of all the Fathers has always understood that the power of forgiving and retaining sins was communicated to the Apostles and their lawful successors, for reconciling the faithful who have fallen after Baptism; and for good reason the Catholic Church has rejected and condemned as heretics the Novatianists, who of old obstinately denied the power of forgiving sins.

"Wherefore this holy Synod, approving and receiving this most true sense of those words of the Lord, condemns the fictitious interpretations of those who falsely distort those words, contrary to the institution of this sacrament, to the power of preaching the word of God and announcing the Gospel of Christ" (Denz. 894).

Ibid., chapter 2, On the Difference Between the Sacraments of Penance and Baptism: "This sacrament, moreover, is known to differ from Baptism in many respects. For, apart from the fact that it differs very greatly in the matter and form by which the essence of the sacrament is constituted, it is certain that the *minister of Baptism need not be a judge*, since the Church exercises judgment over no one who has not first entered her by the door of Baptism. 'For what have I,' says the Apostle, 'to do with judging those who are without?' [1 Cor. 5:12]. It is otherwise with those of the household of faith, whom Christ the Lord has once made members of His body [1 Cor. 12:13] by the laver of Baptism. For if these subsequently defile themselves with any crime, He willed that they should not be cleansed by Baptism repeated, since this is in no way permitted in the Catholic Church, but should be brought *before this tribunal* as accused persons, so that *by the sentence of the priests* they might be delivered—not once only, but as often as, repenting of the sins they have committed, they take refuge in it.

"Furthermore, the fruit of Baptism is one thing and that of Penance another. For through Baptism, 'putting on Christ' [Gal. 3:27], we are made an entirely new creature in Him, obtaining a full and complete remission of all sins. Yet we can by no means attain to this newness and integrity through the sacrament of Penance without great tears and labours on our part, as divine justice requires; hence Penance was rightly called by the holy Fathers a certain *laborious Baptism*.

"And this sacrament of Penance is necessary for the salvation of those who have fallen after Baptism, just as Baptism itself is necessary for those not yet regenerated." (Denz. 895).

Ibid., chapter 5, On Confession [and the Judicial Power]: "From the institution of the sacrament of Penance already explained, the universal Church has always understood that the complete confession of sins was also instituted by the Lord [James 5:16; 1 John 1:9 (Luke 17:14)], and that it is necessary by divine law for all who have fallen after Baptism. For our Lord Jesus Christ, about to ascend from earth into heaven, left priests as His own vicars [Matt. 16:19; 18:18; John 20:23], *as presidents and judges*, to whom all mortal crimes into which the faithful of Christ have fallen should be brought, so that by the power of the keys they might *pronounce sentence concerning the remission or retention of sins*. For it is evident that priests could not have exercised this judgment without knowing the case, nor indeed have maintained equity in imposing penalties, if penitents had declared their sins only in general and not rather in kind and individually." (Denz. 899).

Ibid., chapter 6, On the Minister of This Sacrament and Absolution [also on Judicial Power]: "Concerning the minister of this sacrament, the holy Synod declares that all doctrines which perniciously extend *the ministry of the keys* to any other persons whatsoever besides bishops and priests are false and wholly

alien to the truth of the Gospel. Such doctrines suppose that the Lord's words, 'Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven' [Matt. 18:18], and 'Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained' [John 20:23], were spoken indiscriminately and without distinction to all the faithful of Christ, contrary to the institution of this sacrament, so that anyone should possess the power of remitting sins: public sins by correction, if the person corrected acquiesces, and secret sins by a voluntary confession made to anyone whatever.

"It likewise teaches that even priests who are bound by mortal sin exercise, *through the power of the Holy Spirit* conferred in ordination, *the function of remitting sins* as ministers of Christ; and that those who contend that this power does not reside in wicked priests hold a perverse opinion.

"Although the absolution of the priest is the dispensing of a benefit belonging to another, it is *not merely a bare ministry* of announcing the Gospel or declaring that sins are forgiven; rather, it is *after the manner of a judicial act*, in which sentence is pronounced by the priest himself as by a judge. Therefore the penitent ought not to flatter himself so greatly concerning his own faith as to suppose that, even though he has no contrition, or the priest lacks the intention of acting seriously and truly absolving, he nevertheless has been truly absolved before God on account of his faith alone. For faith without Penance would procure no remission of sins, nor would that man be anything but most negligent of his own salvation who knew that a priest was absolving in jest and did not diligently seek another acting in earnest." (Denz. 902).

Ibid., chapter 7, On the Reservation of Cases: "Since, therefore, *the nature and character of a judgment* require that sentence be pronounced only upon subjects, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God—and this Synod confirms it as most true—that an absolution pronounced by a priest over one in whom he has no ordinary or subdelegated jurisdiction ought to be of no effect." (Denz. 903).

Ibid., chapter 8, On Satisfaction: "Let them keep before their eyes that the satisfaction which they impose is not only for the preservation of a new life and as a remedy for weakness, but also for the punishment and chastisement of past sins; for the ancient Fathers both believe and teach that the keys of the priests were granted *not only for loosing, but also for binding*." (Denz. 905).

We cited canons 1, 2, 3, and 9 above, where the doctrine of the Protestants was discussed (pp. 51–53). In addition:

Canon 10: "If anyone says that priests who are in mortal sin do not have the power of binding and loosing; or that not only priests are ministers of absolution, but that it was said to each and every one of the faithful of Christ, 'Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven' [Matt. 18:18], and 'Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained' [John 20:23], so that by the force of these words anyone could absolve from sins—public sins by correction alone, if the one corrected acquiesces, and secret sins by voluntary confession: let him be anathema." (Denz. 920).

Canon 15: "If anyone says that the keys of the Church were given only for loosing and not also for binding, and that therefore priests, when they impose penalties upon those who confess, act contrary to the purpose of the keys and contrary to the institution of Christ; and that it is a fiction that, when

the eternal punishment has been removed by virtue of the keys, a temporal punishment for the most part remains to be discharged: let him be anathema." (Denz. 925).

*CATECHISM OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT, part 2, chapter 5, question 10 (On the Fittingness of the Institution of This Sacrament): "*As to external Penance, it must be taught that this is the Penance in which the character of a sacrament consists, and that it has certain external things subject to the senses, by which those things are made manifest that take place inwardly in the soul. First of all, it seems necessary to explain to the faithful why Christ the Lord willed that Penance should be numbered among the sacraments. The entire reason for this was that we might have less occasion to doubt the remission of sins which God promised when He said: 'If the wicked man does penance,' etc. For otherwise we would have to remain very much in uncertainty concerning inward Penance, since each person has good reason to fear his own judgment concerning what he does. Thus, in order to come to the aid of this anxiety of ours, the Lord instituted the sacrament of Penance, by which we might be confident, through the absolution of the priest, that our sins had been forgiven us, and our consciences might be rendered more peaceful through the faith which is rightly to be placed in the power of the sacraments. Nor should the words of the priest who lawfully pardons our sins be understood otherwise than the words of Christ the Lord, who said to the paralytic: 'Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee.'"

"Furthermore, since no one can obtain salvation except through Christ and through the benefit of His Passion, it was fitting and most advantageous for us that a sacrament of this kind should be instituted, by whose power and efficacy the blood of Christ, flowing down to us, might wash away sins committed after Baptism; and thus we might profess that the benefit of reconciliation is to be ascribed to that one Saviour of ours."

Ibid., question 11 (How the General Definition of a Sacrament Is Verified in Penance): "That Penance is a sacrament the pastors will easily demonstrate in this way. For just as Baptism is a sacrament because it blots out all sins, and especially that which was contracted by origin, so in the same way Penance, which takes away all sins committed by will or action after Baptism, must truly and properly be called a sacrament. Moreover—and this is the chief point—since those things which are done outwardly both by the penitent and by the priest make known what is effected inwardly in the soul, who could deny that Penance possesses the true and proper character of a sacrament? For 'a sacrament is the sign of a sacred thing': the sinner who repents plainly expresses by signs of things and words that he has withdrawn his mind from the foulness of sin; and likewise from what the priest does and says we readily recognize the mercy of God Himself remitting sins. Indeed, these words of the Saviour clearly indicate this: 'I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.' For the absolution pronounced in the words of the priest signifies that remission of sins which it effects in the soul."

*Ibid., question 54 (On the Power of Absolving): "*We must now speak of the minister of this sacrament. That this minister is the priest who has ordinary or delegated power of absolving is sufficiently evident from the ecclesiastical enactments. For he who is to fulfil this office must possess not only the power of Order but also that of jurisdiction. The words of the Lord in St. John bear distinguished testimony to this ministry: 'Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.'

"It is clear that these words were not spoken to all, but to the Apostles alone, whom priests succeed in this function; and this is also most fitting. For since every kind of grace bestowed through this sacrament flows from Christ the Head to His members, those who alone have the power to consecrate His true body are rightly bound to administer this sacrament to the mystical body of Christ, that is, to the faithful, especially since the faithful are made fit and disposed by this very sacrament of Penance to receive the holy Eucharist. How religiously, moreover, the right of the ordinary priest was once guarded in the most ancient Church may readily be understood from the ancient decrees of the Fathers, by which provision was made that no bishop or priest should dare to perform any function in another's parish without the authority of the one who presided over it, unless some grave necessity appeared to compel it. Thus it was ordained by the Apostle when he instructed Titus to appoint priests in each city, who should nourish and educate the faithful with the heavenly food of doctrine and the sacraments."

PIUS X, Decree "Lamentabili," propositions 43, 46, 47: cited above (pp. 53 ff.), in the discussion of the Modernists.

CODE OF CANON LAW, canon 870: "In the sacrament of Penance, through judicial absolution imparted by a lawful minister, sins committed after Baptism are remitted to the faithful who are rightly disposed."

Canon 871: "The minister of this sacrament is a priest alone."

Canon 872: "Besides the power of Order, for the valid absolution of sins there is required in the minister the power of jurisdiction over the penitent, whether ordinary or delegated."

CONCLUSION

Conclusion I. In the Church there exists a power of remitting sins, granted by Christ.

Proof I. FROM SCRIPTURE.

Four things are set forth in Scripture: an *intimation* of the conferral of the power to remit sins; an explicit *promise*; its *institution*; and its *exercise* or application.

A. INTIMATION OF THE CONFERRAL OF SUCH A POWER

This is found both in the parallelism observed between the Old and the New Law, and in Christ's own manner of acting toward sinners.

"The *parallelism*," says Galtier, "which Christ wished to exist between the religious economy of the New Covenant and that of the Old, suggests that He wished the forgiveness of sin in the former not to take place without any rite. For (a), on the one hand, in the Old Law men were solemnly not cleansed from sin without some definite accompanying rite: compare, for example, the various sacrifices for sin; in respect of the consecration of priests (Exod. 29:1–14, 36); for individual sinners (Lev. 4–6); for the whole people on the great Day of Expiation (Lev. 16). In Christ's own time, moreover, the baptism of penance was administered by St. John the Baptist. (b) On the other hand, Christ wished in His Church (α) there to be rulers and ministers of worship; (β) for incorporation into His people to take place through the baptismal rite; (γ) for His people to possess a table of which the individual members should partake; and (δ) He Himself, by the rite of washing feet, signified that even the Apostles, who had already been washed, needed a certain purification (John

13:8–10). Therefore, the parallelism maintained between the two economies suggests that Christ's will was that, within the new people of God, besides the rite of incorporation, there should also be some means whereby those who had sinned could be cleansed anew."[61]

[61] Galtier, *De Paenitentia*, thesis 9, no. 124 (Paris, 1931), p. 84 f.

An intimation of this kind is strengthened *by Christ's own manner of acting toward sinners whose sins He forgave*. For from the passages cited in the Introduction of the treatise (p. 13 f.) it appears that Christ inaugurated among men, in a visible manner and with words of affirmation, the exercise of the power to remit sins, thereby indeed provoking scandal among the doctors of the Law, who murmured: "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" "This man blasphemes" (Luke 7:49; Matt. 9:3); but among the people, admiration, as they glorified God "who gave such power to men" (Matt. 9:8). From this there arises a direct suggestion that Christ wished such a power to be exercised on earth and communicated to the men whom He was soon to choose and send to continue His own ministry, so that they might act in His stead and bring forth the same fruit of remission and sanctification.

B. PROMISE OF THE POWER

This promise was twice made to the Church: first in the person of Peter, and secondly in the persons of all the Apostles together.

Matthew 16:19: "And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." The Greek reads: "καὶ δώσω σοι τὰς κλεῖδας τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν, καὶ ὃ ἐὰν δήσῃς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται δεδεμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, καὶ ὃ ἐὰν λύσῃς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται λελυμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς."

Matthew 18:18: "Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven." The Greek reads: "Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅσα ἐὰν δήσητε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται δεδεμένα ἐν οὐρανῷ, καὶ ὅσα ἐὰν λύσητε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται λελυμένα ἐν οὐρανῷ."

THE TEXT

The *authenticity* of the entire passage in Matthew 16:17–19 is certain, since it is found in all manuscripts and editions. Three things are contained in it: the intention of constituting Peter the foundation of the Church (v. 18: "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church"); the promise of the keys of the kingdom of heaven (v. 19: "And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven"); and the promise of the power to bind and loose, with its ratification in heaven.

These three appear intimately connected, so that one is the successive declaration of another: the metaphor of the rock or foundation of the society indicates authority; the metaphor of the keys expresses the conception of that authority more explicitly (cf. Isa. 22:22; Luke 11:52; Apoc. 1:18; 3:7; 9:1; 20:1, to which passages an implicit allusion is made in the present text); and the metaphor of the faculty of binding and loosing determines that authority.

The *authenticity* of Matthew 18:18 is certain. Its parallelism with Matthew 16:19 is manifest. Yet the power of binding and loosing is not joined here to the promise of the keys or to the choice of the Apostles as the foundation of the Church; nevertheless, these two things are linked together from Ephesians 2:19 f. ("You are fellow citizens with the saints, and domestics of God; built upon the

foundation of the Apostles"; cf. Apoc. 21:14), and from Matthew 28:18 ff. ("All power is given to me in heaven and on earth. Going therefore ...").

The whole context of the passage, verses 11–35, concerns the remission of sins: in verse 11 the very purpose of the Incarnation and ministry of Christ is placed first ("The Son of man is come to save that which was lost"); verses 12–14 contain the parable of the wandering sheep brought back to the fold; verses 15–17, the passage concerning private correction or denunciation before the judgment of the Church; verse 18, the words of the promise; verses 19–20, the efficacy of the common prayer of the Church in Christ's name; verses 21–22, Peter's question, "Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him?"; verses 23–35, the parable of the servant unwilling to forgive his fellow servant's debt.

The passage on correction, verses 15–17, which forms the *immediate context and provides Christ with the occasion for pronouncing the words of the promise*, is thus rendered by the Vulgate: "But if thy brother shall offend against thee, go, and rebuke him between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother. And if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand. And if he will not hear them, tell the Church. And if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican."

A certain textual and exegetical discrepancy must be noted.[62] In the best manuscripts, the words "against thee" are absent from verse 15, so that the text reads: "But if thy brother shall sin." Hence several Fathers conclude that the duty of fraternal correction extends indiscriminately to all (cf. Origen, *In Jesu Nave*, hom. 7, 6; Augustine, *De fide et operibus*, 3, 4; 26, 48; *Sermon* 82, 8 ff.). In the Vulgate, however, and in several manuscripts, as also in the parallel passage Luke 17:3 f., "against thee" is read; from this it is concluded that the duty of correction concerns the person against whom the brother has sinned. This reading and interpretation agree better both with Peter's question related above and with the subsequent parable of the unmerciful servant.

[62] Cf. Knabenbauer and Lagrange on this passage.

Nevertheless, this discrepancy does not affect our matter. The procedure in the context is this: the one who has refused to yield to private correction must be brought to the judgment of the Church, because in the Church resides all power of binding and loosing.

It must be observed that this conferral of power upon the Apostles does not contradict, or detract anything from, the same power granted to Peter in the other text, but presupposes that power and is fittingly associated with it, as a secondary and dependent power with one that is principal and independent. This primacy is expressed in the very words: "Upon this rock I will build my Church" and "To thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven"; for these things are said explicitly and simply to Peter alone.

THE DOCTRINE

FIRST. In these texts the power is promised to the Church herself, as hierarchical; not to Peter and the Apostles as individuals, as Tertullian and the heretics enumerated above in the first series wished, nor indiscriminately to all the faithful, as the Protestants wish.

In Matthew 16:19, the power of binding and loosing is promised not only to Peter but to the Church —that is, to Peter not as a private person but as head, and therefore to the Church *in its head and*

perpetually. This is evident from the fact that the power is attached to Peter as foundation of the perpetual Church (v. 18: "And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it").

Likewise, in Matthew 18:18, the power is given to the Apostles as rulers of the Church. This is evident both from the parallelism with the earlier text, 16:19, in which the same power is conferred (a parallelism strengthened by the fact that the Apostles, according to Ephesians 2:20 and Apocalypse 21:14, are with Peter the foundation or rock of the Church), and from the logical connection between verses 17 and 18, which runs thus: if private correction proves useless, let the offender be referred to the Church; for you (that is, the Church, or the Church in you, its superiors) have the power of binding and loosing (cf. Knabenbauer on this passage).

Nor is it a valid objection that the context shows that this power belongs also to private persons, since it says that correction can similarly be performed by a private individual.

For private correction carries only the force of persuasion, whereas the correction of the Church involves a power properly so called. This is evident both from the fact that recourse to the Church would otherwise be made in vain, and especially from the reason assigned for this recourse, namely that the Church can bind or loose anything whatsoever—which a private individual cannot do.

Neither is it a valid objection that this power is shown to belong indiscriminately to all the faithful by the words immediately following, verses 19 f.: "Again I say to you, that if two of you shall consent upon earth concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father who is in heaven."

For, first, the question here is not of the exercise of power but of the efficacy of prayer. Moreover, the subject is the public prayer of the Church itself; hence the hierarchy is not excluded, but rather is indirectly included by the nature of the matter, inasmuch as the efficacy of prayer is attributed to the Church as such. Furthermore, as far as the logical connection is concerned, some deny that any connection exists and say that these words were spoken on another occasion (as the transitional formula "Again I say to you" suggests) and were placed here by the Evangelist because of the connection between heaven and earth which is also found in the words of the promise (v. 18). Others, however, explain the connection in various ways, and consequently verse 18 is in no way diminished (cf. Knabenbauer).

Knabenbauer chooses the following connection: "Albert seems to see the matter better when he says that these words suggest the force of the judgment pronounced by them. For what was said in verse 18 is confirmed by a new argument, by which, as Maldonatus rightly says, an inference is made from the lesser to the greater: if God grants them whatever two shall ask, how much more will He ratify the judgment of the Church? Therefore, lest anyone despise the judgment of the Church, Christ teaches how efficacious even prayer alone is (Jansenius); for by the fact that the prayer of a few has such weight with God, He shows how great is the power of loosing and binding (Lamy). Intimately connected with this is Christ's appointment of another remedy by which He could effectively remove scandals and provide for the salvation of the brethren, and which must also be used if anyone should contumaciously despise the judgment of the Church."[63]

[63] Knabenbauer, *Commentarius in Evangelium secundum Matthaeum* (on Matt. 18:18 ff.; Paris, 1903), p. 132.

From what has been said it is evident how ineptly certain adversaries assert that Matthew 18:18 concerns a *mere exhortation to forgive continually*, together with the assurance that the matter will be

ratified in heaven. For Christ does not confer power on every man who has been offended, but upon the Apostles; otherwise it would follow that, when the offended person refused to forgive the offence, that offence would not be remitted in heaven either.

SECOND. The power of making laws and of judging is promised, that is, the power of imposing or relaxing an obligation.

For this meaning is carried by the metaphor of the words "binding" and "loosing," according to the usage of the rabbis and Jews in the time of Christ,[64] to whom St. Matthew, writing in Aramaic, is reasonably held to have accommodated himself. For among the rabbis to loose and bind signified, *in the first place*, to declare authoritatively and determine what was permitted (to loose) or forbidden (to bind) according to the Law. This, however, implies the power of binding directly with regard to accepting an interpretation of the law, and indirectly with regard to observing the law itself. Accordingly, from these words it follows that the Church has from Christ the power of obliging the faithful directly to accept her interpretation of the divine law and indirectly to observe the law itself.

[64] Cf. Knabenbauer, on this passage, who cites Morin, *Commentarius historicus de disciplina in administratione sacramenti Poenitentiae*, book I, chapter 8; also H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* (Munich, 1922), vol. I, pp. 738 ff.

Moreover, and principally, among the rabbis and Jews in the time of Christ and thereafter, these words signified the direct issuing of precepts and decrees, or dispensing from them, in matters belonging to religion and discipline. Hence in Christ's words there is promised to the Church the power of making direct decisions in matters belonging to the religion of Christ, such that the things determined by her are ratified in heaven.

Confirmation. To the Greek words of these passages, λύειν ("to loose") and δεῖν ("to bind"), there correspond in Hebrew the words אָסַר (*ʾāsar*, "to bind"; cf. Judges 15:13; Ezek. 3:25) and הִתִּיר (Aramaic שְׁרָא, "to pronounce lawful" or "to permit"). Now the former (*ʾāsar*, "to bind") is sometimes taken in Scripture in the sense of an obligation, namely, that of a prohibition (Dan. 6:8, 9, 14, 16) or of a vow (Num. 30:3, 10: "a bond upon his soul," "to bind upon his soul").[65]

[65] Cf. Knabenbauer, on this passage; Lightfoot, *Horae Hebraicae, Opera omnia* (Rotterdam, 1686), vol. I, part 2, pp. 336 ff.; Buxtorf, *Lexicon chaldaicum, talmudicum et rabbinicum* (Basel, 1609).

THIRD. There is promised, and indeed principally, the power of remitting and retaining sins themselves in the internal forum.

This is evident, first, *from the breadth and absolute character* with which such a power is conferred ("Whatsoever—whatsoever").

Likewise, from the principal end for which it is given, namely the sanctification and salvation of souls, which cannot exist without the removal of sin. For if a power of making laws and judging is given in matters which pertain to the salvation of souls, it has chiefly to do with sins, which are to be removed or, where this indirectly serves salvation, retained.

Likewise, from the promised heavenly confirmation of the sentence; for in heaven regard is had to the things which belong to the internal forum, and sins belong principally to that forum.

Likewise, from the context concerning fraternal correction. For it is probably a question of a sinner properly so called (according to the reading, "If thy brother shall sin against thee"), who is corrected by a

judgment of the Church, which judgment is to possess validity in heaven, or in the internal forum.

Nor is it a valid objection that, according to the text, this correction can also be performed by a private person and therefore is not to be understood as effective and remissive in the internal forum. For the correction of the same man which, when performed privately, is only conciliatory in the external forum, is also remissive in the internal forum when performed by the power of the Church, on account of the words immediately following in the text: "Whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven." Moreover, whether the question be of a sinner properly so called or merely of an outward offender (understanding in this manner the words, "If thy brother shall sin against thee"), from the very fact that such a one, after being referred to the Church, does not acquiesce in her judgment, he must be regarded as guilty before God until, repenting, he is absolved by the Church. Hence the judgment of the Church is already understood as binding him in sin and loosing him from sin.

"Wherefore," says Knabenbauer, "to the explanation which we were able to derive above from the words alone, a confirmation and illustration are here added from the connection of the discourse, and examples of legislative and judicial power are proposed. What, therefore, could not be asserted with sufficient clarity and distinctness for us concerning the power of remitting sins from 16:19 (as Palmieri says), may safely be affirmed in this passage. Even Protestant interpreters, such as Keil, Weiss, and others, infer this power of remitting or retaining sins from the context of the discourse; they [falsely] think that this power was entrusted to the assembly of the faithful."[66]

[66] Knabenbauer, *Commentarius in Evangelium secundum Matthaeum*, on Matthew 18:18 (Paris, 1903), p. 132.

Likewise, from the context concerning the power of the keys, of which the power of binding and loosing is a certain specification. For the keys of the kingdom of heaven imply the power of opening or closing the kingdom of heaven, or of permitting or prohibiting entrance into that kingdom, which takes place precisely through the remission or retention of sins.

Nor does it avail to object from the words of Luke concerning the key of knowledge, or a merely doctrinal and declaratory power (11:52: "Woe to you lawyers, for you have taken away the key of knowledge: you yourselves have not entered in, and those that were entering in you have hindered"). For in Matthew the metaphor of the key is not confined to the object of knowledge but applies most broadly to all things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven. Furthermore, the power of absolving from sins may be called the key of knowledge, inasmuch as "knowledge ... is called the authority of discerning, and the priest has this knowledge so that he may discern in absolving" (St. Thomas, *On Matthew* 16:19).

Likewise, from the parallel words of John 20:23, to be discussed below, which manifestly refer to sins.

Likewise, from the interpretation of the Fathers.

The Fathers unanimously understand the power of loosing as the power of remitting sins (indiscriminately appealing to both texts of Matthew and to John 20:23); indeed, certain Fathers appear to restrict it to this power alone, such as Chrysostom (*On the Priesthood* 3.5, cited below, p. 118), Theophylact, Bede, and St. Thomas (*On Matthew* 16:19: "Whatsoever thou shalt loose, that is, if thou employ the ministry of absolution ... it shall be loosed in heaven, that is, it shall be held as absolved in heaven"). Among modern authors J. Grimm agrees with them (*Das Leben Jesu*, 1887 ed., vol. 3, p. 648), whereas Knabenbauer (*On Matthew* 16:19) takes the contrary position.

With regard to Matthew 16:19, compare the decree of Callistus (according to Tertullian, *On Modesty* 21, cited above, pp. 46 ff.); Tertullian, *On Prescription* 22 and *Scorpiace* 10, as well as *On Modesty* 21 (cited there, where, admitting Callistus's interpretation, he nevertheless refers the power of absolving to Peter alone as a personal charism); Origen, *On Matthew*, tome 12, 14; Cyprian, *On the Unity of the Church* 4; Firmilian, in Cyprian's *Letters* 75, 16; Pacian, *Letter* 3, 11; Jerome, *Letter* 14, 8 and *On Matthew* 16:19; Ambrose, *On Penance* 1, 7, 33; Augustine, *Sermon* 295, 2 and *On Christian Doctrine* 1, 18, 17; Aphrahat, *Demonstration* 7, 11.

Ambrose, in the place cited, says: "They [the Novatianists] do not have ... Peter's inheritance, who do not have Peter's see, which they rend by an impious division. But they do this wickedly when they deny that sins can be forgiven even in the Church, although it was said to Peter: 'I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven' (Matt. 16:19)" (M.L. 16, 496 ff.).

Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* 1, 18, 17: "Therefore He gave these keys to His Church, that the things which she loosed upon earth might be loosed in heaven, and the things which she bound upon earth might be bound in heaven (Matt. 16:19): namely, that whoever did not believe that his sins were forgiven him in His Church should not have them forgiven; but whoever believed and turned away from them after being corrected, placed within the bosom of the same Church, should be healed by that same faith and correction" (M.L. 34, 25).

Aphrahat, in the place cited: "Hear also, you who hold the keys of the gates of heaven, and open the doors to penitents" (*Patrologia Syriaca*, Graffin–Nau, 1, 329).

With regard to Matthew 18:18, compare Origen, *On Matthew*, tome 13, 31; Hilary, on the passage; Pacian, *Letter* 1, 6 and *Letter* 3, 11 ff. (cited on p. 48); Jerome, on the passage; Augustine, *Sermon* 295, 2 and *The City of God* 20, 9, 2; the Council of Trent, session 14, *On Penance*, chapter 6 and canon 10.

Pacian, *Letter* 1, 6: "God would never threaten one who does not repent unless He forgave one who repents. God alone, you say, can do this. It is true; but what He does through His priests is His own power. For what is that which He says to the Apostles: 'Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven' (Matt. 16:19; John 20:23)? Why say this if it were not lawful for men to bind and loose? Or is this allowed to the Apostles alone? Then it is lawful for them alone also to baptize, and for them alone to give the Holy Spirit, and for them alone to cleanse the sins of the nations; because all these things were commanded to none but the Apostles. But if in one place there is given both the loosing of bonds and the power of the sacrament, either all this has come down to us from the Apostles' pattern and power, or none of it has been relaxed from those decrees. ... Therefore, if both the power of washing and the power of chrism, gifts far greater, have descended from thence to the bishops, the right of binding and loosing also has been theirs. Even if we rashly claim it for ourselves on account of our sins, God nevertheless granted it to those who hold the chair of the Apostles, who have also received the name of His Only-Begotten" (M.L. 13, 1057).

The objections of the adversaries and their false interpretations of these texts are almost the same as those which they bring against the text of John; they will be considered below.

C. INSTITUTION OR CONFERRAL OF THE POWER

John 20:22–23: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."

Greek: "λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον· ἄν τινων ἀφῆτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας,

ἀφέωνται αὐτοῖς· ἄν τινων κρατῆτε, κεκράτηνται."

THE TEXT

Immediately preceding these words are John 20:19–22: "Now when it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord. He said therefore to them again: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When he had said this, he breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

The *genuineness of the whole passage*, 20:19–23, is certain. Certain Liberals, however, ineptly deny the historicity of Christ's words so that they may arbitrarily explain from them the process by which this power developed in the Church.

The *circumstances attending the words which conferred the power* were Christ's appearance to the disciples assembled in the upper room on the very day of the Resurrection; His showing them His hands and side; the twofold giving of peace ("Peace be to you"); and His breathing upon the disciples.

The *introductory words* are: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you"; "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

Parallel passages illustrating the text. Concerning verse 21 ("As the Father hath sent me, I also send you"): Matthew 28:18–20 ("Going therefore ...") and 2 Corinthians 5:18–20 ("For Christ therefore we are ambassadors"); concerning verse 22 ("Receive ye the Holy Ghost"): John 3:5–8; 16:7 ff. ("The Spirit breatheth where he will"; "If I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you"); concerning verse 23 ("Whose sins you shall forgive"): Matthew 9:2, 5 (the paralytic); Matthew 6:12 (the Lord's Prayer); Matthew 6:13–15 (exhortation to forgive); Luke 7:47 ff. (the sinful woman); Luke 12:10 (sin against the Holy Spirit); Luke 23:34 (Christ's prayer upon the Cross); Acts 2:38; 8:22; 1 John 1:9; 2:12. These passages treat the forgiveness or remission of sins.

The form of the words. ἄν (conditional particle: "if"); ἄν τινων ("if of any"); ἀφῆτε ("you shall remit"; from ἀφίημι: to pardon, forgive, remit an offence; it recurs in precisely this sense in Matthew 6:12, 14; 9:2, 5, 6; Mark 2:5;

Luke 23:34; Acts 8:22, etc.); τὰς ἁμαρτίας ("sins," without distinction, generally and absolutely, or of whatever kind and number); ἀφίενται (a present form, that is, "they are forgiven," not "they shall be forgiven," but "they are"; the immediacy of the effect is thus expressed, as though it were said that they are forgiven by that very fact or on that account; some manuscripts have ἀφίονται, which is a rarer present form; others have

ἀφέωνται, a Doric form for ἀφεῖνται, the perfect passive form, "they have been forgiven," which accordingly expresses the effect already accomplished more emphatically); κρατῆτε ("you shall retain") and κεκράτηνται

("they are retained"), from κρατεῖν (to take hold with the hand, to hold, retain; indeed, to have power, to rule, to possess), correspond to the words "you shall bind" and "they shall be bound" in

the two passages concerning the promise quoted above.

THE DOCTRINE

FIRST. In these words power is given to the Church herself as hierarchical, not to the Apostles individually, as many Liberal adversaries maintain, nor indiscriminately to individual believers, as the Protestants maintain.

That the power is conferred not on the Apostles alone but on the Church, so as to remain permanently within her, is evident from the parallelism with the texts of the promise; from the analogy with the other powers of teaching, baptizing, and consecrating ("Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world"; "As often as you shall eat this bread and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until he come"; compare the words of Pacian quoted above, p. 77); from Christ's words, "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you," since this mission was not to cease with the death of the Apostles; from "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," for the Holy Spirit was promised to the whole Church; and from the end of this power, namely the good of the faithful, the sanctification of souls and remission of sins, which must continue until the end of the world.

That the power is conferred on the *hierarchical Church alone*, and not on each and every believer, is evident from the parallelism with the texts of the promise, from the analogy with the other powers, and from Christ's words, "I also send you," since the evangelization of the world was committed not to individual believers but to the Apostles; likewise from the nature of this power, which implies authority properly so called or judgment concerning sins. Nor does it matter that other disciples besides the eleven Apostles were present at Christ's appearance, as would seem from Luke 24:33, or that one of the Apostles, Thomas, was absent, since those words are understood as addressed to the Apostles alone. Moreover, it is not certain that Luke and John are speaking of the same appearance, or that Christ did not appear to the disciples more than once on the same day.

H. Ch. Lea, in his *A History of Auricular Confession* (Philadelphia, 1896, vol. 1, p. 108), attempts to prove that Christ's words are to be understood of a special power conceded only to the Apostles: "In whatever sense the power here granted is taken, it is evident that the primitive Church regarded it as given to those holy men alone whom Christ had chosen as His immediate vicars. At the time when the Gospels were written, the Apostles were not thought to have successors, for Christ had predicted that the day of judgment would come before that generation passed away; and this prediction, as found in all the Gospels, shows how universally Christians expected its fulfilment."

As Pesch observes, these words contain "a specimen of the sophistical, indeed manifestly absurd, method by which Dr. H. C. Lea [a distinguished Liberal in this matter] ... strives to weaken the arguments for Catholic doctrine put forward against him. ... This man [he writes], who wishes to be a historian, is taught by history that the Apostles not only instituted successors but also commanded them in turn to institute other successors. There is scarcely any writing of the primitive Church in which mention is not made of the successors of the Apostles. At the time when St. John's Gospel was written, very many successors of the Apostles were already flourishing; nevertheless, according to Dr. Lea, no one at that time thought that there would be successors of the Apostles, and therefore evidently no one could refer the power granted to the Apostles to their successors. Hence what Dr. Lea wonders at is how such a claim could be accepted by Europe even in the dark centuries of the

Middle Ages—an incredible thing, unless it actually happened—yet it shows the magnitude of his blindness. Far more astonishing, indeed, is how the childish trifles with which Dr. Lea's work is filled could be offered for sale as history at the end of the nineteenth century."[67]

[67] Pesch, *De Poenitentia*, proposition 1, no. 14 (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1920), p. 7, note.

SECOND. The power of remitting sins is given (indeed a twofold power, of remitting and retaining), that is, not merely of remitting but also of not remitting; from this the judicial character of both powers is itself made manifest.

This is evident from the very words, understood both according to their natural meaning and according to their frequent use in Scripture. For to remit sins is to free the soul from guilt (cf. Matt. 9:2, 5 and the other passages cited above, p. 78). Thus, just as when Christ said to the paralytic (ἀφέωνταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι), "Thy sins are forgiven thee" (Matt. 9:2), the Scribes rightly understood these words in their proper sense and were scandalized, saying, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Luke 5:21; cf. 7:49), so when Christ affirmed, "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them," the Apostles understood nothing other than this, nor ought we to understand anything else.

This is confirmed by the solemnity of the act (that is, Christ's first public appearance, the breathing upon them, the invocation of the Holy Spirit), which shows that an extraordinary power is conferred by Christ; from the conferral of the Holy Spirit, to whom sanctification and justification are particularly attributed; from the conferral of Christ's own mission ("As the Father hath sent me, I also send you"), who came to "save that which was lost" (Matt. 18:11) and "to take away the sin of the world" (John 1:29); from the understanding and practice of the Apostles, to be discussed below; from the understanding and practice of the ancient Church, to be treated in the Second Proposition; and from the direct interpretation of the Fathers (compare Origen, Firmilian, Pacian, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, Gelasius, Gregory the Great, to be cited there).

THE PROTESTANTS OBJECT that the preceding words do not concern the power of remitting sins, but rather:

Either the power of regulating outward discipline;

Or the power of preaching the remission of sins, or of exhorting men to reconciliation with God, as appears from the manner in which Paul interprets this "ministry of reconciliation": "[God] hath reconciled us to himself by Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. For God indeed was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing to them their sins; and he hath placed in us the word of reconciliation. For Christ therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us. For Christ we beseech you, be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:18–20); or from Luke himself who, when narrating the same appearance of Christ (24:36–49), reports that Christ commanded the disciples that "penance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, unto all nations" (v. 47); or from the parallel words of Matthew 28:19 ff. and Mark 16:15 ff. concerning the command to baptize and evangelize unto salvation;

Or the power of declaring that the remission of sins has been accomplished by God;

Or the power of remitting sins through Baptism, as appears from those Fathers who refer these words to baptismal remission: thus Cyril of Alexandria, *On John* (20:23), book 12, chapter 1; Augustine, *On Baptism* 3, 18, 23; Ambrose, *On Penance* 1, 8, 36; Firmilian, among Cyprian's letters 75, 16; especially

Cyprian, *Letter* 73, 7 (to Jubaianus) and *Letter* 76, 11 (to Magnus), where he says: "Since in Baptism each one's sins are remitted, the Lord also proves and declares in His Gospel that sins can be forgiven only through those who have the Holy Spirit. For after His Resurrection, sending His disciples, He speaks to them and says: 'As the Father hath sent me, I also send you.' When He had said this, He breathed upon them and said to them: 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained' (John 20). In this place He shows that only one who has the Holy Spirit can baptize and grant remission of sins" (M.L. 3, 1193 ff.).

REPLY

That John's words concern the power of regulating external discipline we simply deny, just as it is arbitrarily asserted by our adversaries contrary to the manifest meaning of the words "to remit and to retain sins."

For the same reason it is denied that they concern the power of preaching the remission of sins.

St. Paul, in the passage cited from 2 Corinthians, speaks generally of the ministry of preaching by which a man is led in various ways to obtain the remission of his sins, whether through subjective dispositions or through the reception of a sacrament, either Baptism or Penance. Therefore the Apostle does not thereby exclude the existence in the Church of a special mode of obtaining the remission of sins through a sacrament; otherwise he would also exclude baptismal remission itself.

The words of Luke and the words of John do not report the same discourse of Christ, even if they were spoken during the same appearance. For by the former words Christ explains in a general way the mission upon which He sends the Apostles, namely, the preaching of the Gospel of penance and the remission of sins; by the latter, however (which Luke omitted, but John added, as was his custom in supplementing the narratives of the other Evangelists), He explains the particular power of remitting sins.

Moreover, according to the opinion of several exegetes, those words of Luke more probably refer to another appearance, of which Matthew 28:16–20 and Mark 16:15–18 speak, and correspond to the words of Mark 16:15 ff.: "And he said to them: Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned." Thus Luke, from verse 36 to verse 43, narrates the same appearance of Christ as John 20:19 ff., omitting, however, the words concerning the power of remitting sins; then, from verse 44 to the end, he briefly gathers together the principal instructions given by Christ to the disciples during various appearances.

On this matter Knabenbauer, on Luke 24:43 ff., writes: "From the manner of narrating, it by no means follows that what the Evangelist adds in verse 44 was spoken by Christ on the same day. He now briefly completes the account, since in another part of his work, namely the Acts, he had proposed to write more accurately of Jesus' frequent intercourse with the Apostles over forty days and of His Ascension into heaven. Nor is it an obstacle that the

Evangelist continues, 'And he said' [εἶπεν δέ]; for the particle δέ by no means always indicates some continuous or uninterrupted sequence of events. Indeed, Luke also uses it when passing to another event separated from the preceding one by a longer interval of time, as is evident from a comparison

and harmony of the Gospel narratives (6:1, 12; 9:46, 51; 13:23; 18:15, etc.). Hence Weiss wrongly contends that the expression εἶπεν δέ signifies that these things were said immediately, without further delay; Schanz and Keil rightly deny this, citing 16:1; 17:1; 18:1; 20:41."[68]

[68] *Comm. in Luc.* (24, 44), Parisiis, 1905, p. 653.

The words of Matthew and Mark are parallel to one another and to the words of Luke just mentioned, but not to the words of John, because they refer to another specific meaning and were also spoken on another occasion. The Novatianists had already devised this Protestant effort to identify the text of Matthew with that of John, or to combine them into one; Pacian had already refuted it in their case (*Letter* 3, 11, cited above, p. 48).

It is not a question of a power to declare that sins have been remitted by God.

The words express *remission*, not *declaration*; moreover, nowhere in Scripture do the words "to remit sins" mean merely to declare that they have been remitted. Rather, they always mean a direct remission, whether accomplished by God (cf. Matt. 6:12; 9:2, 5; Luke 7:47 ff.; 12:10; 23:34) or by man (cf. Matt. 6:12–15; 18:35; Mark 11:25 ff.).

Moreover, if the word "remit" were taken to mean "declare" in the first member of the assertion ("Whose sins you shall remit"), it would have to be taken in the same sense in the second member ("They are remitted unto them"). This is impossible: first, because sins are not declared remitted *by God*, but are remitted; second, because the expression would thus amount to a mere tautology ("Whose sins you shall declare remitted, they are declared remitted").

Furthermore, a declaration of the remission of sins made to an individual man is either infallibly connected with the effect of remission on God's part, in which case it is a true power of remitting, although perhaps not a judicial one; or else it is not so connected, in which case it is futile and indeed implies a falsehood, because it declares sins to have been remitted absolutely when perhaps, through a lack of interior disposition (known to God alone), they have not been remitted. But if this is said to be a power of declaring in general that sins are remitted to all who have faith in Christ, it implies no power or privilege, but is merely an exposition of the evangelical faith, which any man can make both to others and to himself.

It is not a question of the power of remitting sins through Baptism.

For the power contained in John's words concerns sins generally and without distinction, and thus extends at least to those already baptized and can be exercised more than once; but the baptismal power concerns only the unbaptized and can be exercised only once with respect to the same subject.

Likewise, that power is judicial, since it is exercised not only by remitting but also by retaining; this cannot be said of the power of Baptism, since it is exercised upon those who are not subjects.

Likewise, the power of retaining, if said of Baptism, cannot be understood appropriately: first, because sins cannot be retained by the power of baptizing except in the improper and negative sense that Baptism is not administered; secondly, because Christ gave His disciples a proper and direct command to baptize, but did not directly issue a command to retain sins.

Likewise, John's words contain no allusion to the proper regenerative end or the proper ablutionary rite of Baptism, as occurs in Scripture whenever this sacrament is spoken of. The power of baptizing

was explicitly and solemnly given by Christ to the Apostles on another occasion, namely immediately before the Ascension, and in other words: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19). Indeed, it is probable that even before the Passion, at least occasionally and privately, the Apostles were sent by Christ to baptize, according to John 3:22–26; 4:1 ff. (cf. the treatise *On Baptism*, article 2, pp. 28 ff., 32 ff.).

The Fathers whose authority is invoked do not teach that John's words properly and directly concern the power of baptizing. Rather, they refer those words to this power in a broader sense, because of the affinity between the two sacraments either on the part of the effect (the remission of sins) or on the part of their principal cause (the Holy Ghost). They do this chiefly in a controversy concerning Baptism (Cyprian, Firmilian, and Augustine), or concerning Penance against the Novatianists (Ambrose), in order to prove their own point from the common character of both sacraments.

Thus *Cyprian*, in order to prove his position regarding the invalidity of Baptism outside the Church, argues as follows: in Baptism the remission of sins occurs (as also in Penance); but only he who has the Holy Ghost can remit sins, as is clear from the fact that Christ (when He instituted Penance) joined the power of remitting sins to the conferral of the Holy Ghost when He said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive ..."; therefore Baptism cannot be administered outside the Church, or by one who does not have the Holy Ghost. *Firmilian* argues in a similar manner.

For this reason *Ambrose* (who, moreover, does not directly appeal to John's words), following the same logical process, says against the Novatianists, who admitted baptismal remission but denied penitential remission: "Why do you baptize, if sins may not be remitted through man? In Baptism assuredly there is remission of all sins. What difference does it make whether priests claim that this right has been given to them through Penance or through the washing? The mystery is one in both" (*On Penance* 1, 8, 36; M.L. 16, 497).

Augustine, however, in the passage cited, refers John's words (almost as Cyprian does) generally and commonly to every mode of remission of sins which takes place in the Church, whether through Penance or through Baptism; and from John's words he says that the remission of sins takes place only in the Church, where the dove, or the Holy Ghost, is:

"'As the Father hath sent me,' He says, 'I also send you.' When He had said this, He breathed upon them and said to them: 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained' (John 20:22–23). Therefore, if they represented the person of the Church, and this was said to them as though it were said to the Church herself, the peace of the Church remits sins, and alienation from the peace of the Church retains sins —not according to the judgment of men, but according to the judgment of God and the prayers of spiritual holy men, who judge all things but are themselves judged by no man (1 Cor. 2:15). For the rock retains, the rock remits; the dove retains, the dove remits; unity retains, unity remits. But the peace of this unity exists in the good alone, whether those already spiritual or those advancing toward spiritual things in harmonious obedience. It does not exist in the wicked, whether they make a disturbance outside or are endured within with groaning, whether they baptize or are baptized.

"And just as those who are endured within with groaning, although they do not belong to that unity of the dove and to that glorious Church which has neither spot nor wrinkle nor any such thing (Eph. 5:27), nevertheless, if they are corrected and confess that they approached Baptism as very wicked

men, are not baptized again but begin to belong to the dove, through whose groanings sins are loosed and from whose peace, when estranged from it, sins are retained; so also those who are more openly outside, if they have received the same sacraments, when they are corrected and come to the unity of the Church, are liberated not by Baptism repeated, but by the same law of charity and bond of unity" (*On Baptism* 3, 18, 23; M.L. 43, 150).

Finally, *Cyril of Alexandria*, in the passage cited, takes occasion from John's words to explain that there are two distinct ways of obtaining the remission of sins, namely Baptism and Penance:

"In what manner, then, or by what reason does the Saviour assign to His disciples a dignity which is due to the divine nature alone? ... He considered ... that those who already possessed within themselves the divine and Lordly Spirit ought also to be masters of remitting sins and of retaining whichever they wished, the Holy Ghost dwelling within them remitting or even retaining according to His good pleasure, although this should perhaps be done through men. Men inspired by the Spirit remit or retain sins in two ways, as I judge: either they call to Baptism those who are worthy, men already proved by the gravity of their life and steadfastness of faith, or they forbid and exclude from divine grace those who are not yet worthy; or they remit and retain sins in some other manner, namely when they correct the erring children of the Church or pardon the penitent" (*On John* [20:23], 12, 1; Pusey, 3, 140).

D. EXERCISE OR APPLICATION OF THAT POWER BY THE APOSTLES

The application of the power of remitting sins in the internal forum, or penitential practice properly so called, cannot be distinctly determined for the apostolic age. The reason for this is, on the one hand, the occasional character of the writings which exhibit the apostolic ministry (the Acts and the Epistles), and the less frequent use of the Sacrament of Penance on account of the holier life of the first faithful; and, on the other hand, the indefinite, or rather conjoint, exercise of the properly sacramental power with the other faculties belonging to the general power of the keys, namely that of correcting, imposing penalties, excommunicating, and absolving from these penalties. Consequently, from the text alone it is impossible to determine with certainty what pertains only to these latter faculties and what also pertains to the sacramental power.

What the Apostle sets forth in 2 Corinthians 5:18–20 as the "ministry and word of reconciliation" ("He hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation"; "He hath placed in us the word of reconciliation"), although it refers in general to the dispensation of the Gospel of salvation, nevertheless especially points toward sacramental reconciliation, both that of Baptism and that of Penance, which are included in that dispensation according to the power conferred by Christ in John 20:23.

In general, it appears from the Epistles that the Church understood this ministry of reconciliation as the right and office of correcting those who err, even by separating them from the Christian community and from the spiritual benefits entrusted to it, to the end that they might be brought back to salvation. Sometimes this office of correction is proposed as something common to all the faithful (considered socially), under the aspect of instruction or correction: Galatians 6:1, "Brethren, and if a man be overtaken in any fault, you, who are spiritual, instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness"; 2 Thessalonians 3:15, "Do not esteem him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (cf. James 5:19 ff.); James 5:16, "Confess therefore your sins one to another"; Jude 22 ff., "Some indeed reprove,

when they have been judged; but others save, snatching them out of the fire." At other times it is presented more directly as an authoritative act of superiors: 2 Thessalonians 3:6, "And we charge you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother walking disorderly, and not according to the tradition which they have received of us"; 1 Timothy 5:20, "Them that sin reprove before all, that the rest also may have fear"; 2 John 10, "If any man come to you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house, nor say to him, God speed you"; 3 John 10, "For this cause, if I come, I will advertise his works which he doth."

In certain passages, in particular, a more direct exercise of the power of binding is exhibited (1 Cor. 5:3–5; 1 Tim. 1:19 ff.; 2 Cor. 13:2 ff.) and of the power of loosing (2 Cor. 2:6–10; 1 Tim. 5:22).

1 CORINTHIANS 5:3–5. Paul judges, or binds, the incestuous Corinthian: "I indeed, absent in body, but present in spirit, have already judged, as though present, him that hath so done, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, you being gathered together and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Here the power of binding is exercised directly through excommunication, and indirectly through the sacramental power, insofar as that incestuous man is judged unworthy of absolution because of his obstinacy in evil. "Non-Catholics infer from this passage that the right of punishing and excommunicating belongs to the entire Church; but they fail to observe that Paul speaks of himself alone as the one punishing, and that he gathers the Church solely for the purpose of carrying out that sentence with greater solemnity. Nor does it follow, from the command that the faithful cast out the incestuous man, that they ought to have made this decision in a kind of democratic manner; just as in many other passages the hierarchical constitution of the Church, demonstrated by so many certain testimonies of Scripture, is assumed as something known."[69]

[69] Cornely, Commentary on 1 Corinthians (5:3–5) (Paris, 1890), p. 124 ff.

1 TIMOTHY 1:19 ff. "Having faith and a good conscience, which some rejecting have made shipwreck concerning the faith: of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered up to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (cf. 2 Tim. 4:14 ff.).

The same power of binding is exercised.

2 CORINTHIANS 13:2 ff. "I have told before, and foretell, as present, and now absent, to them that sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again, I will not spare. Do you seek a proof of Christ that speaketh in me?"

Here the Apostle repeats the use of the same power by commission from Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS 2:6–11. "To him who is such a one, this rebuke which is given by many is sufficient: so that contrariwise you should rather forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore, I beseech you, that you would confirm your charity towards him. For to this end also did I write, that I may know the experiment of you, whether you be obedient in all things. And to whom you have pardoned any thing, I also. For, what I have pardoned, if I have pardoned any thing, for your sakes have I done it in the person of Christ, that we be not overreached by Satan."

Here there is an exercise of the power of loosing, at least from excommunication (and consequently, indirectly, from sin), in the name and by the authority of Christ ("I have pardoned ... in the person of Christ"). It is also probable that the question concerns the direct remission of sin itself in the internal forum (in what manner this took place is not our present concern), although this cannot be established from the text alone. Accordingly the ancient Latin commentators connect this passage with Christ's words in Matthew 18:18: "Whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven."

Estius, however, interprets this passage of the power of releasing from punishment, or of granting indulgences: "Someone asks ... why, by the name of pardon or forgiveness which is here spoken of, absolution from the bond of excommunication should not be understood rather than absolution from sins in the Sacrament of Penance, since both forms of absolution were available to penitents. I reply that both the words and the context of the Apostle entirely reject this manner of understanding the passage. First, the relaxation of the bond of excommunication is nowhere called pardon or indulgence, either in Sacred Scripture or among the Fathers, the proper meaning of these terms being opposed to such a usage. Next, as for the words, 'To whom you have pardoned anything,' that is, some part, 'I also have pardoned,' these have no place in the absolution of an excommunicated person, just as the following does not either, by which a penitent, after the mother Church has relaxed and remitted any part of his satisfaction, is released from the remainder of the punishment due. That this is manifestly a relaxation of punishment is also declared by the preceding words, 'This rebuke ... is sufficient for him,' as though he were saying: Enough of the penalties have already been given; let the remainder be remitted to him ... In this sense Chrysostom and Theophylact expressly interpreted these words of Paul."[70]

[70] Estius, Commentary on 2 Corinthians (2:6–11) (Mainz, 1859), p. 37.

Observe that from the context itself it is easily inferred that the man here absolved by the Apostle is the same incestuous man whom he had bound in 1 Corinthians 5:3–5. Furthermore, not a few exegetes and all the Fathers teach this (among others Origen, Gregory Nazianzen, Pacian, Ambrose, Augustine, Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Gregory the Great), with the sole exception of Tertullian, who denies it in On Modesty, 13, lest he be compelled to admit (the very thing he vehemently attacks) that the sin of impurity can be absolved by the Church.

Modern Liberals foolishly teach, from both passages (1 Cor. 5 and 2 Cor. 2), either that there was no hierarchy among the Corinthians in the time of St. Paul, or at least that the condemnation and absolution of the incestuous man were effected not by the hierarchy but by the faithful themselves.

For although the text itself does not allow us to infer anything definite concerning the manner in which the aforesaid judgment was carried out, it is certain that the case was principally judged by Paul himself, as the supreme ruler of that community. But the fact that Paul commands the sentence to be executed by the Corinthians themselves, or associates them with himself in judging, refers to the community itself as such, or as acting through its immediate and local rulers.

That these rulers were present in the Corinthian community, even though they are not expressly named, appears both generally from the Apostle's practice of appointing pastors in individual churches (Acts 14:23), and particularly from the express mention of pastors among the Thessalonians and Philippians (1 Thess. 5:12–14; Phil. 1:1), and from the general mention of the

"governments" of churches in this very First Epistle to the Corinthians (12:28), as well as from the epistle of Pope Clement (about A.D. 96–98) to the Corinthians. There, after admonishing the bishops, priests, and levites of that city concerning the office proper to each (40:1), the Pope recalls to the Corinthians that these authorities had been established in all regions by the Apostles themselves from the beginning (42:4; 44:2 ff.).

1 TIMOTHY 5:22. "Impose not hands lightly on any man, neither be partaker of other men's sins."

Several doctors refer this text to the Sacrament of Order; nevertheless, it is probably to be referred to the Sacrament of Penance. According to this opinion, these words contain a remarkable testimony to the practice of absolving among the Apostles.

On the matter Galtier writes: "As a matter of fact, this opinion was formerly common, and has been upheld again by not a few recent writers, namely that the rite in question refers to the reconciliation of sinners. If this interpretation is correct, we have here a practice of this kind already in use at that time, and excessive facility in granting it was to be guarded against.

"Moreover, in favour of that interpretation [according to which Penance is in question] the following reasons are given:

"A) The authority of the most ancient writers, who invoke this passage when treating of the reconciliation that is not to be granted to sinners or heretics, for example Tertullian (On Modesty 18:9); St. Pacian of Barcelona (Exhortation to Penance 8 and Letter 3:19; PL 13, 1086 and 1076).

"B) Two facts which, considered together, fit that hypothesis very well: (a) in the apostolic age the imposition of hands is a nearly universal rite, whatever the particular matter in question concerning a man; (b) already in the third century, and immediately thereafter, it appears in documents that the reconciliation of heretics or sinners was performed by the imposition of hands as its proper and traditional rite (cf., for example, St. Cyprian, Letters 15:1; 16:2, etc.).

"C) The context suggests that this passage deals with sinners to be reconciled, and not, as the interpretation now commonly received maintains, with ordinations to be performed prudently. For (a) the careful selection of those to be ordained has already been treated in chapter 3; (b) the entire fifth chapter, on the contrary, concerns the way of dealing with sinners; (c) the preceding verse (20), concerning the rebuke of 'those that sin before all,' is unanimously understood by the Fathers as applying to sinners in general, and not, as the interpretation of more recent writers maintains, to clerics alone. And indeed, not without grammatical and logical force, this verse is here said to mean: 'Those priests who, after denunciation and proof, are found really to have sinned, reprove before all'; (d) 'to share in other men's sins' was understood in the apostolic age and following centuries as entailing the preservation or reception into one's assembly of sinners, but by no means their sins on the part of one who had ordained them imprudently.

"D) Nor is it an objection that elsewhere in St. Paul 'to impose hands' signifies ordination; for it is well known that in the Pastoral Epistles words or formulas occur which are not used elsewhere in the same sense. In this very epistle, for example, the word προΐστασθαι is used in chapters 3:4–5 and 3:12 concerning heads of families, and in chapter 4:17 concerning superiors in the Church; the word πρεσβύτερος, moreover, occurs in chapter 5, verse 1, of an 'elder' and in verse 17 of a 'presbyter.' This interpretation therefore appears truly probable, which may be seen more fully expounded and

defended in RSR [Recherches de science religieuse], III (1912), pp. 448–460, and DTC [Dictionnaire de théologie catholique], VII, cols. 1306–1313."[71]

[71] Galtier, De Paenitentia, no. 218 (Paris, 1931), p. 149 ff., note 2.

Proof II. FROM TRADITION[72]

It is certain, and is conceded even by the Liberal adversaries, that some external penitential practice existed from the beginning of the Church; likewise, at least from the end of the second century, that there was a determinate discipline according to which sinners were restored to the communion of the Church after undergoing prescribed penalties. It must further be shown, and especially against modern Liberals, that the mind of the Church was not merely to reconcile the aforesaid sinners in the external forum, but properly to remit their sins, or to reconcile them in the internal forum and before God, and this through an act and ministry of the hierarchy itself.

[72] See especially Petavius, Morinus, Palmieri, Boudinhon, Funk, Rauschen, Vacandard, Tixeront, Galtier, and D'Alès, cited above, pp. 19 ff. Concerning the doctrine of Callistus, Hippolytus, Tertullian, and Cyprian, compare especially D'Alès.

We shall demonstrate this, first, by examining the principal documents of the first five centuries (for the mind of the later Church is readily conceded by our adversaries); secondly, by considering two principal subjects in which the mind of the Church is especially manifested, namely the comparison established by the Fathers between Baptism and Penance, and the threefold controversy concerning the Montanists, the Lapsed, and the Novatianists; thirdly, by showing the worthlessness of the reasons upon which the Liberals attempt to establish their theory.

FIRST. DOCUMENTS OF TRADITION

The testimonies of the Fathers may conveniently and logically be divided into three classes. The first belongs to the first two centuries, from the Didache up to but not including Tertullian, and contains the rarer and less determinate documents, among which the testimony of Hermas is particularly prominent. The second class, belonging to the third and fourth centuries, chiefly concerns the controversies of the Montanists, the Lapsed, and the Novatianists; it contains clearer and more notable documents, among which stand out the testimonies of Tertullian (Catholic and Montanist), and, from the third century, the Decree of Callistus, Hippolytus, Origen, and Cyprian (On the Lapsed), while from the fourth century there are Pacian and Ambrose (against the Novatianists). The third class, belonging to the fourth and fifth centuries, is more dogmatic than polemical; it comprises more distinguished documents, among which the words of Chrysostom and Augustine are prominent.

Especially with regard to the documents of the first class, it must be observed that there is a twofold reason for the difficulty of determining the mind of the primitive Church: first, the scarcity of documents, arising both because many were lost during the persecutions (as is evident concerning the famous Decree of Callistus itself, known to us only incidentally from the account of Tertullian, its opponent), and because in general occasions for writing were rarer. The use of this sacrament also was less frequent, whether because of the exceptional holiness of the first faithful, or because the practice had not yet spread of confessing only venial sins (which is denied by some in the fourth century and even considered scarcely known in monasteries), or because of the unequal manner of judging concerning the gravity of sins and consequently concerning the necessity of submitting them

to the power of the keys, or because of the abuse by certain persons of postponing public penance and avoiding its rigours; secondly, the very character of the documents, some of which touch on this matter only incidentally (unlike the later documents in the controversies of the Montanists and Novatianists, which turn on the power of the keys itself), while others, moreover, are prevented from treating it by their own apologetic purpose against the pagans (the works of the Apologists of the second century), to whom the doctrine of ecclesiastical penance might have furnished an occasion of scandal or calumny.

Nevertheless, the few surviving documents receive light and strength both from mutual comparison and, especially, from their connatural connection with the documents of the later class (the argument from continuity and prescription). For the Church could not, in the immediately subsequent period, have changed its opinion connaturally and without controversy; nor do the controversies of the Montanists, the Lapsed, and the Novatianists furnish any indication of such a change.

DIDACHE (A.D. 90–100). 4:14: "In the church you shall confess [ἐξομολογήσῃ] your sins, and you shall not approach your prayer with an evil conscience." (In the Epistle of James 5:16 it is said: "Confess therefore your sins one to another.") 10:6: "If anyone is holy, let him approach [the Eucharist]; if anyone is not, let him do penance [μετανοείτω]." 14:1: "On the Lord's Day, however, coming together, break bread and give thanks, after you have confessed your offences, so that your sacrifice may be pure" (Funk, I, pp. 15, 25, 33).

The passage concerns confession and penance ordered toward the remission of sins, or toward the cleansing of the conscience, to be performed in the Church. The context directs the mind toward a penitential rite (probably that of public confession), to be carried out before the superiors of the Church. Now Clement, the Pope, at the same period speaks precisely of penance which is performed before those superiors. Compare below, article 36, where the testimony of the Didache is again adduced.

CLEMENT OF ROME, FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS (A.D. 96–98). He speaks of conversion and penance which God grants to those who will it (7:4); he exhorts them to perform penance for their sins with their whole heart (8:2); and he urges the authors of the sedition among the Corinthians to confess their fault to God (52:1), finally adding (57:1): "You, therefore, who laid the foundations of the sedition, be subject in obedience to the presbyters, and accept correction unto penance, bending the knees of your hearts" (Funk, I, pp. 171–173).

The subject here is true penance of the heart, to be performed before the superiors of the Church.

EPISTLE OF BARNABAS (A.D. 96–98). 19:12: "You shall confess your sins. You shall not approach prayer with an evil conscience" (Funk, I, p. 95). These words are parallel to Didache 4:14.

IGNATIUS († 107), EPISTLE TO THE PHILADELPHIANS. 3:2: "For as many as are of God and Jesus Christ, these are with the bishop; and whoever, being led by penance, return to the unity of the Church, these too shall belong to God, so that they may live according to Jesus Christ" (Funk, I, p. 267). 8:1: "God, therefore, forgives all who do penance, if they turn to union with God and communion with the bishop" (ibid., I, p. 271).

The passage concerns penance and remission before God, or in the internal forum, which is linked to union with the Church, and precisely to union with her as hierarchical ("with the bishop"). This

directs the mind to the concept of the power of the keys in the Church and to the words of Christ: "Whose sins you shall forgive … Whatsoever you shall loose …"

POLYCARP, EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS (ABOUT A.D. 107). 6:1: "Let the presbyters be disposed to compassion, merciful toward all, … not excessively severe in judgment, knowing that we are all debtors on account of sin" (Funk, I, p. 303).

The very judgment concerning sins and sinners is directly attributed to the hierarchy; and consequently there is no question of merely speculative judgment (according to that saying, "Judge not, and you shall not be judged"), which belongs indiscriminately to all the faithful.

HERMAS, THE SHEPHERD (ABOUT A.D. 140–155). According to Origen (Commentary on Romans 10:31), Hermas is the man whom St. Paul greets under that name in Romans 16:14; according to others, he was a contemporary of St. Clement I (see above, Vision 2:4, 3); but, according to a fragment of the Muratorian Canon (lines 73–80), the Liberian Catalogue, and the common and more probable opinion of scholars, he was the brother of Pius I (A.D. 140–155), and during that pope's reign wrote at Rome this work, in the manner of an apocalypse, entitled The Shepherd. Some (such as Funk) see in it a rigorism even stricter than Montanism itself, while others, on the contrary, see a certain laxity in discipline. Thus Tertullian himself, who in On Prayer 16, while still a Catholic, admits the authority of Hermas and endeavours to reconcile him with himself (indeed, he seems to join his work to the canonical books by naming it together with Scripture), later, as a Montanist, rejects his teaching in On Modesty 10, calling him a lover of adulterers.

This work enjoyed great authority both in the West and in the East, at least until the fourth century, so that by certain Fathers (such as Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen) it seems to have been numbered among the canonical writings and was appended to the books of the New Testament in ancient manuscripts. It therefore claims considerable value as a witness of ancient tradition, especially in the matter of Penance, which is the principal theme of the whole work, set forth by the Shepherd or Angel of Penance (ὁ Ποιμήν, ὁ ἄγγελος τῆς μετανοίας) through five Visions, twelve Mandates, and ten Similitudes.

The sum of the teaching of this work may be reduced to the following heads.[73]

[73] This doctrine is more fully expounded by D'Alès, L'Édit de Calliste (Paris, 1914), pp. 57–115; De sacramento Poenitentiae (Paris, 1926), pp. 17–21; Galtier, De Paenitentia, nos. 226–233 (Paris, 1931), pp. 155–162; E. Amann, in Dictionnaire de théologie catholique, art. "Pénitence," cols. 259–263.

GENERAL OBJECT AND PURPOSE. This is set forth in Similitude 8:11, 3: "Answering me, he said: All those, he says, who have done penance with their whole heart and have purified themselves of their aforementioned iniquities, and have added nothing more to their sins, shall receive from the Lord a remedy for their former sins, if they have not doubted concerning these commandments, and they shall live unto God. But all those, he says, who have added to their sins and have walked in the desires of this world, shall condemn themselves to death" (Funk, I, p. 575).

SUBJECT AND OBJECT OF PENANCE. Every sinner and every sin are included, as is clear both generally from the text just cited and particularly with regard to greater crimes, whether adultery (Mandate 4:1, 4–11; Vision 2:2, 8; moreover, Tertullian, as noted above, calls Hermas a lover of adulterers), or even apostasy (Similitude 9:21, 3 ff.; 9:26, 5 ff.; Vision 2:2, 8; 2:2, 2–4). Therefore, the fact that apostates appear to be excluded from the remission of sins in Similitude 8:6, 4 and 9:19, 1

and 3 must be understood to mean that those apostates are presumed unwilling to repent, and that in them there is scarcely any hope of voluntary amendment (cf. Similitude 8:6, 4 and 9:26, 5).

PENANCE IS UNDERSTOOD AS DISTINCT FROM BAPTISMAL REMISSION. In Mandate 4:3, 1 Hermas explains that he had heard "from certain teachers" that there is "no other penance" besides the baptismal one; the Shepherd answers: "You have heard rightly; for so the matter stands. For he who has received remission of sins ought no longer to sin, but to remain in chastity" (ibid., 2; Funk, I, p. 479). He then adds: "After that great and holy calling [Baptism], if anyone, tempted by the devil, should sin, he has one penance. But if he should afterwards sin again and do penance, it is of no avail to such a man; for he shall live with difficulty" (ibid., 6; Funk, I, p. 481).

Relying on these words, certain writers (such as Zahn, Funk, Rauschen, and Watkins) think that Hermas is a rigorist, or that he denies the existence, in general, of postbaptismal penance, but in the last words cited proclaims only a temporary favour, or a special jubilee of postbaptismal penance, announced by the Angel on account of the multitude of sinners at that time, after which there would no longer be any place for postbaptismal remission.

Nevertheless, this interpretation seems to be rejected. For, first, the words "after that great calling" do not signify (as the aforesaid interpreters would have it) an extraordinary invitation to penance through a proclaimed jubilee, but the calling to the faith through Baptism. This is evident both from Hermas's consistent use of the word "calling," not only in the New Testament but in Hermas himself (ibid., a little below; also Similitude 8:1, 1; 8:11, 1; 9:14, 5; 9:17, 4), and from the distinction made between the calling of the Christian and the mission of the Shepherd, who is said to have been sent by God to grant penance so that in the faithful the "calling" effected by Christ may be preserved (Similitude 8:11, 1). Moreover, penance is presented, not as something extraordinary, but as a remedy instituted by God in view of the sins which, among the "called," or baptized, arise from human frailty (Mandate 4:1, 8 and 11; 4:3, 4 ff.).

As to the Shepherd's denial, in the earlier words, that there is any other penance besides baptismal penance, it must be understood thus (lest he manifestly contradict the subsequent assertion): after Baptism there is not another penance of the same kind as that which is had in Baptism, namely the simple remission of sins (ἄφεσις), although there is another, that is, a laborious penance, or one properly called penance (μετάνοια).[74]

[74] This distinction between ἄφεσις and μετάνοια is common among the Fathers. Cf. Galtier, De Paenitentia, thesis 13, no. 232 (Paris, 1931), pp. 160 ff., note. Augustine, Incomplete Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, 19, observes: "Those … who have already been baptized, we say are more properly healed by penance, not renewed; for renewal is in Baptism" (PL 35, 2102).

Moreover, speaking absolutely, there ought to be no kind of penance after baptismal penance, insofar as Christians ought to live in such a way as to have no need whatsoever of a new penance (which, indeed, is of another kind): "For he who has received remission of sins ought no longer to sin."

The same manner of speaking is observed in Clement of Alexandria, who teaches that pre-baptismal penance is the first and the only penance, and yet at the same time adds that a second penance is offered to the lapsed (Stromata 2:13).

Finally, the Shepherd's assertion that postbaptismal penance is granted only once ("he has one penance") proceeds from his eschatological presupposition (concerning which see Vision 2:2, 7; 3:5,

5; 3:9, 5; 4:1, 2–3). For the sense here appears to be this: because of the approaching end of the world, or at least of the time of probation allotted to Christians (according to the tenets of Millenarianism), those who sin again after a second penance will with difficulty be left an opportunity for useful penance.

THE MANNER OF PENANCE IN HERMAS. It entails contrition of heart, satisfaction amid tribulation, and cleansing of the heart, or a change of life. Similitude 7:4 ff.: "The penitent must afflict his soul and humble himself mightily in all his actions and be afflicted by various tribulations; and when he has endured the tribulations which come upon him, he who created and strengthened all things will have mercy on him and will grant him some remedy. And this certainly, if he sees the heart of the penitent pure from every evil deed" (Funk, I, p. 555).

THE REMISSION OF SINS THROUGH PENANCE. It is understood properly and in the internal forum, as is evident from all the foregoing.

THE ROLE OF THE HIERARCHY. In this penance it is not explicitly set forth, since the purpose of the book is not to expound the penitential rite but only to urge sinners to penance; nevertheless, it is indirectly and sufficiently affirmed.

For, first, the Shepherd himself, or Angel of Penance, who is said to be the superior over penance and to have the office of admitting penitent sinners into the walls of the Church, and this after careful consideration of them, is not improbably a bishop or presbyter, namely one of those who, according to Vision 2:4, 3, seem to preside over sinners doing penance. It is the Church which first appears to Hermas and entrusts him to the Shepherd to be instructed concerning penance (Visions 1–4). The Church is the tower itself, constructed indeed by ministers, into whose walls sinners are inserted through penance (Vision 3:3, 3; Similitude 8:2, 1, 2, 4). Hermas is commanded to communicate the revelations he has received concerning penance to the presbyters (Vision 2:4, 3), whereby it is intimated that these preside over the penance of sinners. The divine command by which it is ordered that sinners be received (Mandate 4:1, 8) can concern none but the superiors of the Church. Entry into the Church takes place through Penance (Vision 3:5, 5; Similitude 8:6, 6) just as through Baptism (Vision 3:2, 5); likewise, through Penance the seal of Baptism, broken by sin, is renewed (Similitude 8:6, 3); here it is intimated that the administration of Penance, like that of Baptism, is under the authority of the Church.

IRENAEUS, Against Heresies (about A.D. 185). 1.10.1: "[God] gives life to the just ... to some indeed from the beginning, but to others from penance ..." (PG 7, 549). 1.13.7: "Those [Gnostics] who say and do such things have also seduced many women, even in our own districts bordering on the Rhône. Of these women, some, 'having their consciences seared with a hot iron,' make public confession; but others, ashamed to do even this, silently withdraw into themselves, despairing of the life of God. Some have fallen away altogether, while others hesitate between the two courses" (PG 7, 592; cf. 1.6.3; 1.13.5; 3.4.2).

Here the subject is the remission of sins distinct from Baptism ("some from the beginning, others from penance"), which takes place in the internal forum ("gives life to the just"), through penance before the Church ("they make public confession"). From this period, or about the end of the second century, explicit testimonies of so-called *exomologesis*, or penitential discipline, begin to multiply. Compare what is said below concerning this testimony in articles 36, 43, and 45.

To this first age there also belong certain ecclesiastical instances of penance, some of which are related by later Fathers.

John the Apostle, as Clement of Alexandria relates (*Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?,* 42), received back into the Church a certain Christian who had associated himself with robbers and committed various crimes, after penance had been imposed and fulfilled.[75]

[75] "When he [the robber] heard these things, at first he stood with his face cast down to the ground; then, having thrown away his weapons, he began to weep bitterly. When the old man [that is, John the Apostle] approached him, he embraced him, and with groans and lamentations, as much as he could, washed away his crime, expiating it with tears as with another baptism, while concealing only his right hand. Then the Apostle, promising and swearing that he had obtained pardon for him from the Saviour, and praying and falling upon his knees, kissed the young man's right hand, as already purified by penance, and brought him back into the Church. Thenceforth, partly by frequently beseeching God with prayers, partly by continuing fasts together with the young man, and partly by soothing his spirit with various persuasive words, he did not desist, so they say, until he had brought him back with firm constancy to the bosom of the Church, offering a great example of true penance, a great proof of regeneration repeated, and a trophy of the future resurrection ..." (PG 9, 650 ff.).

Many women, led by the Gnostics into apostasy and impurity, were restored to the Church through public penance, as Irenaeus testifies in the passage just cited.

Cerdo, a heretic, having come to Rome under Pope Hyginus (who died about A.D. 140), twice made public confession, according to Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* 3.4.3; cf. 1.27.1).

St. Dionysius, bishop of Corinth in the middle of the second century, according to Eusebius, wrote in an epistle to the Church of Amastris in Pontus, in which he "commands that those who turn back from any fall or offence whatsoever, or even from heretical error, be received" (*Ecclesiastical History* 4.23.6; PG 20, 386). The matter concerns penance by which one is to be received by the Church.

Several heretics were converted to the Church by Polycarp under Pope Anicetus (A.D. 157–168), according to Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* 3.3.4).

Concerning Marcion and Valentinus (middle of the second century), Tertullian writes: "It is established that these men did not exist so very long ago, but approximately under the principate of Antoninus, and that they at first believed the Catholic teaching in the Roman Church, under the episcopate of blessed Eleutherius, until, on account of their ever-restless curiosity, which also caused the brethren to avoid them, they were expelled once and again; Marcion, indeed, together with the two hundred sestertia he had brought into the Church. Finally, having been banished into perpetual separation, they spread abroad the poison of their doctrines. Afterwards, that same Marcion professed penance, and, a condition being proposed to him, would have received peace if he restored to the Church the others whom he had instructed unto perdition; but he was overtaken by death" (*On Prescription Against Heretics* 30; PL 2, 48 ff.).

The power of binding and loosing is here affirmed, as is absolution—or at least the willingness to absolve—from apostasy (and even from impurity, for in *Against Heresies* 4.2, Epiphanius calls Marcion also guilty of fornication).

Certain confessors of Lyons (about A.D. 178), who had fallen away from the confession of the faith through torture, were received once more into the Church and underwent martyrdom, according to Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 5.1.45 ff.).

A certain Natalis, previously a confessor of the faith, afterwards embraced the heresy of the Theodotians about A.D. 200 and was made their bishop. He underwent public penance before Pope Zephyrinus (A.D. 198–217), so that he might be restored to the communion of the Church. Thus an anonymous writer relates, as quoted by Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 5.28.11 ff.).

In the third century the power of the Church is explicitly asserted; indeed, the question directly concerns its extent and exercise in the controversy over Montanism and the Lapsed, which extends into the following century in the controversy over the Novatianists.

TERTULLIAN (born about A.D. 160; converted to the faith about A.D. 193–195; a Montanist heretic from about A.D. 213; died after A.D. 222, probably between A.D. 240 and 250).

A distinction must be made between the teaching of Tertullian as a Catholic, set forth chiefly in his *On Penance* (A.D. 200–206), and his teaching as a Montanist, set forth chiefly in the last book he wrote, *On Modesty* (A.D. 217–222), in which he himself expressly says that he retracts his earlier opinion. In the first work he explicitly teaches the existence of hierarchical power and its extension to all sins; in the other he explicitly and directly denies this extension, while implicitly, or equivalently, he appears to deny the very existence of the power.

Although the question here directly concerns only the existence of the power, it will be useful, because of the connexion of the subject matter and the ideas, to consider at the same time both teachings of Tertullian, as drawn from these two works.

Book On Penance.

D'Alès aptly sets out the state of the question and the sum of the doctrine contained in this book as follows:

"Tertullian wrote this little work while a Catholic. He treats (chapters 1–4) of the virtue of penance in general, which he defines in 1.1 as 'a certain passion of the mind arising from displeasure at a former judgment.' Then (chapters 5–6) he treats of the penance which must be practised before Baptism. Finally (chapters 7–12) he treats of the penance which takes place after Baptism. This last part has received various interpretations.

"F. X. Funk, in KGAU[76], vol. 1, p. 166 (1897), asserted that the matter there concerns peace to be had with God, and in no way peace with the Church. Against this, G. Esser wrote *Die Buss-Schriften Tertullians De Paenitentia und De Pudicitia und das Indulgenzedikt der Papstes Kallistus* (Bonn, 1905). Esser, refuting Funk's arguments in TQS[77], vol. 88, pp. 542 ff. (1906), also admitted that peace with the Church is in question; but he so attenuated this that he denied its conjunction, by its very nature, with peace with God. Similar opinions may be read in Batiffol, BLE[78], 1906, pp. 339 ff., and Vacandard, RCF[79], 1 April 1907, pp. 113 ff. We shall defend the position which, before Esser, we had maintained in our *Théologie de Tertullien* (Paris, 1905), and after him in *Édit de Calliste* (1922). It is this:

[76] Kirchengeschichtliche Abhandlungen und Untersuchungen (three volumes).

[77] Theologische Quartalschrift (Tübingen).

[78] Bulletin de Littérature ecclésiastique.

[79] Revue du Clergé français.

"1. Throughout the whole little book *On Penance*, the subject is sins to be remitted through the ministry of the Church (against Funk 1).

"2. Throughout the whole little book *On Penance*, the subject is peace with the Church, which by its very nature is joined to peace with God (against Funk 2, Batiffol, and Vacandard)."[80]

[80] De Sacramento Paenitentiae, thesis 2 (Paris, 1926), p. 23.

1. Definition of Penance in general.

Chapter 1: "This race of men, which we ourselves once belonged to—blind, without the light of the Lord—knows penance by nature as a certain passion of the mind which arises from displeasure at a former judgment [another reading: a worse judgment]. But they are as far removed from understanding its reason as they are from the very Author of reason; for reason is a thing of God. ... How irrationally they behave in practising penance may be sufficiently explained by this single example: they employ it even with respect to their own good deeds. They repent of faith, love, simplicity, patience, and mercy, whenever any of these has fallen into ingratitude. They curse themselves for having done good, and cultivate in their hearts especially that kind of repentance which is bestowed upon the best works, taking care to remember it lest they again perform any good; on the contrary, they apply themselves more lightly to repenting of evil deeds; indeed, they more easily commit evil through that same repentance than do good through it" (PL 1, 1335–1338).

2. The existence of postbaptismal Penance. A second hope is given, but it is a final one; a second penance is given, but only once.

Chapter 7: "It irks me to add mention of a second hope, indeed now the last, lest by considering the remaining aid of repentance we seem to show that there is still room for sinning. Far be it from anyone to interpret it in this way. ... Let no one ... become worse because God is better, sinning as often as he is forgiven. ...

"Accordingly, he watches, assails, and besieges, in order that, if he can, he may strike our eyes with carnal concupiscence, or entangle our mind in worldly delights, or overthrow our faith with fear of earthly power, or turn us away from the sure path by perverse traditions. He is not wanting either in scandals or in temptations. God, therefore, foreseeing these his poisons, although the door of forgiveness has been shut and the bolt of baptism has been drawn, has permitted something still to remain open. In the vestibule He has placed a second penance, which opens to those who knock; but now once, because now for the second time. And never again thereafter, because what comes next would be in vain. Is not this once enough?

"You possess what you had no longer deserved: you have lost what you had received, yet the Lord's indulgence restores it to you; be grateful for the repeated benefit, not to speak of its increase. For it is greater to restore than to give, since it is more pitiable to have lost than never to have received at all. Yet the mind must not at once be cast down and overwhelmed by despair, if a man is indebted to a second penance. Let him indeed be ashamed to sin again, but not ashamed to repent again; let him be ashamed to be in danger again, but not of being delivered again. Let no one feel disgust at it: in repeated illnesses repeated medicine is needed. You will show yourself grateful to the Lord if you do not refuse what the Lord offers you. You have offended, but you can still be reconciled. You have One to whom you may make satisfaction, and One who indeed wills it" (PL 1, 1351 ff.).

3. All sins are the object of Penance. In the passage cited no restriction is made. Indeed, two of the three graver offences are expressly referred to—impurity and apostasy (cf. chapter 8)—for which Tertullian, when he became a Montanist, subsequently denied pardon.

4. Remission of sins through this Penance is understood in the internal forum and before God.

In the words quoted, the matter concerns the restoration of that which was received in Baptism and of renewed spiritual health. In chapter 10, cited below, it is said that by penance salvation and the healing of conscience are brought about. The same is also evident from the parables of the wandering sheep, the lost drachma, and the prodigal son, by which in chapter 8 the existence of postbaptismal penance is proved; likewise from its parallelism with Baptism, by which it is called a second hope, a second penance, a renewed benefit, the second plank of salvation after shipwreck (chapters 4 and 12), and a second aid (chapter 12).

Chapter 12: "If you shrink from public confession [*exomologesis*], ponder Gehenna in your heart, which confession extinguishes; and picture beforehand the greatness of the punishment, so that you may not doubt the adoption of the remedy. ... Therefore, when you know that, after that first protection of the Lord's Baptism, there is still in confession a second aid against Gehenna, why do you abandon your salvation? Why do you shrink from approaching what you know will heal you? ... A sinner who knows that confession has been appointed by the Lord for his restoration—will he pass it by? (Daniel 4). The king of Babylon, too, regained his kingdom. For long he offered penance to the Lord; for seven years he practised public confession in a state of squalor, with his nails growing out in the manner of eagles and his hair assuming the roughness of lions. What harsh treatment! He whom men used to fear found God ready to receive him (Daniel 4). The Egyptian emperor, on the other hand, cast aside penance and its ministry of public confession. What more shall I say about these two, as it were, planks of human salvation, when my concern should be the duty of my conscience rather than the business of my pen? Being a sinner of every stamp along with them all, and born for no other thing than penance, I cannot easily keep silence concerning it, since even he who was the prince of the human race and of offence against the Lord, Adam, was restored to his paradise by confession and did not remain silent" (PL 1, 1358–1360).

5. This remission of sins takes place through the absolution of the Church. This is clear, first, from the very denial of the power of the Church, or of its extent, which Tertullian as a Montanist maintains in the book *On Modesty*, in which he expressly admits that he is correcting his earlier opinion. Likewise, from what he says here in *On Penance*, that sinners should "fall at the feet of the presbyters" (chapter 9), or "be openly absolved" (chapter 10), and that they should "enlist the whole [assembly of the Church] in the work of obtaining the remedy" (chapter 10). Likewise, from the whole rite of external and public penance before the Church, and for the purpose of obtaining her peace, that is, from the so-called *exomologesis*, which stands in relation to Penance as its ministry (chapter 12, just quoted: "Penance and its ministry of exomologesis"), inasmuch as Penance "is not merely declared in the conscience, but is also administered by some act" (chapter 9).

Chapter 9: "The more restricted the transaction of this second and single penance, the more laborious its proof, so that it may not merely be declared in the conscience but also be administered by some act. This act, which is more frequently expressed and called by the Greek name, is *exomologesis*: by it we confess our sin to the Lord—not indeed as though He were ignorant, but because satisfaction is arranged by confession, penance is born of confession, and God is appeased by penance. Thus

exomologesis is the discipline of prostrating and humbling oneself, enjoining a mode of life fitted to obtain mercy; concerning clothing and food, it commands one to lie in sackcloth and ashes, to cover the body with uncleanness, to cast down the spirit with grief, and to exchange for harsh treatment the things by which one has sinned. Moreover, it commands one to know only simple food and drink —not, of course, for the sake of the belly, but for the sake of the soul; commonly to nourish prayer by fasts, to groan, to weep, and to cry out to the Lord your God day and night; to fall at the feet of the presbyters, to kneel before those dear to God, and to charge all the brethren with the commission of interceding on one's behalf. All this *exomologesis* does, in order to commend penance, to honour the Lord through fear of danger, so that, by acting as advocate for the sinner itself, it may secure the removal of God's indignation; and, if I may say so, by means of temporal affliction it may not frustrate, but rather discharge, eternal punishments" (PL 1, 1354 ff.).

Chapter 10: "Yet I presume that most men either shun this work, as an exposure of themselves, or put it off from day to day, being more mindful of shame than of salvation. ... Besides, among brethren and fellow-servants, where hope, fear, joy, sorrow, and suffering are common (because they possess a common spirit from a common Lord and Father), why do you regard them as anything other than yourself? Why do you flee from those who share your misfortunes as from applauders? The body cannot rejoice at the affliction of one member: it is necessary for the whole to suffer with it and to work together toward its remedy. In one and the other there is the Church, and the Church is Christ. Therefore, when you stretch yourself out at your brethren's knees, it is Christ you touch, Christ you implore. Likewise, when they shed tears over you, Christ suffers, Christ entreats the Father. What the Son asks is always easily obtained. Great indeed is the gain which concealing one's fault promises to shame! Surely, if we hide anything from human knowledge, shall we thereby conceal it also from God? Are the esteem of men and the knowledge of God to be compared in that way? Is it better to be condemned in secret than to be openly absolved?" (PL 1, 1355 ff.).

Book On Modesty.

1. Tertullian explicitly declares that he is changing the opinion he had previously defended together with Catholics.

Chapter 1: "This title, therefore, will likewise be directed against the Psychics [i.e., Catholics], and against my own former association with them in opinion, so that they may all the more cast this in my teeth as a mark of inconstancy. Yet a repudiation of fellowship never constitutes a presumption of wrongdoing, as though it were not easier to err with the many, when truth is loved by the few. For useful inconstancy will bring me no more disgrace than harmful constancy would bring me honour. I do not blush at an error from which I have freed myself, because I rejoice that I have been freed from it, because I recognize myself as better and more chaste. No one who makes progress is ashamed. Knowledge, too, has its stages in Christ, through which even the Apostle advanced" (PL 2, 1033).

2. Accordingly, at the very beginning of the book (chapter 1), he mentions and vehemently attacks the so-called decree of Callistus, quoted below, in which pardon is granted for the sin of impurity.

Later, in chapter 10, he repudiates as a lover of adulterers the *Shepherd* of Hermas, which enjoyed no slight authority among Catholics, and whose teaching he himself had followed (as is apparent from the parallel between *Shepherd*, Mandate 4.3, and *On Penance*, chapter 7, quoted above):

"You shall again be a Christian after being an adulterer. This is what you tell me, most kindly interpreter of God. But I should readily [accept this] from you if the writing of the *Shepherd*, which

alone loves adulterers, had deserved to be included in the divine instrument; if it were not judged by every council of the Churches, including your own, to be among the apocryphal and false writings—itself adulterous and therefore a patroness of its companions. From it, moreover, you obtain other initiations. Perhaps in its defence you will plead that shepherd whom you depict upon the cup, himself a profaner of the Christian sacrament, deservedly an idol of drunkenness and an asylum of the adultery which follows the cup, from which you drink nothing more eagerly than the sheep of a second penance. But I draw from the writings of that Shepherd who cannot be broken. John at once presents Him to me with the washing and ministry of penance, saying: 'Bring forth fruits worthy of penance, and do not say: We have Abraham for our father'" (PL 2, 1052 f.).

3. He immediately distinguishes, in a general way, between remissible and irremissible sins (chapter 2), and between human remission or peace, which he denies to irremissible sins, and divine remission or peace, which he concedes can be granted for all sins (chapter 3).

Chapter 2: "We assign sins as the causes of penance. We divide these into two classes: some will be remissible, others irremissible. ... Concerning this distinction we have already brought forward certain discussions of the Scriptures, some retaining sins and others remitting them. But John also teaches: 'If anyone knows his brother to commit a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and life shall be given him' (1 John 5:16); because he does not sin unto death, this will be remissible. 'There is a sin unto death: I do not say that anyone should ask for it' (ibid.); this will be irremissible. ... According to this distinction of sins, the condition of penance also differs. One kind will be able to obtain pardon, namely, in the case of remissible sin; another will by no means be able to obtain it, namely, in the case of irremissible sin" (PL 2, 1036 f.).

Chapter 3: "But first I must settle an objection raised from the other side [that is, an objection of Catholics] against that kind of penance which we have just defined as lacking pardon. For if, they say, any penance lacks pardon, you ought not to perform it at all. Nothing, indeed, ought to be done in vain. ... And they are certainly right to raise this objection, since they have arrogated to their own power the fruit of this penance also, that is, pardon. So far as they are concerned, it is from them that human peace is obtained; but so far as we are concerned, who remember that the Lord alone forgives sins, and indeed mortal sins, penance will not be undertaken in vain. For, being referred to the Lord, and by that very fact cast down before Him, it will the more obtain pardon, because it entreats this of God alone, because it does not believe human peace sufficient for its sin, because it prefers to blush before the Church rather than to communicate. ... And if it does not reap peace here, it sows with the Lord; nor does it lose its fruit, but prepares it: it will not be without benefit, provided it is not without duty. Thus neither is penance of this kind vain, nor is discipline of this kind harsh" (PL 2, 1037 f.).

4. He then determines which sins are irremissible, namely those which are "sins unto death" (according to 1 John 5:16 and Jeremiah 7:16; 11:14; 14:11). Under this class, in chapter 19, he enumerates murder, idolatry, fraud, denial, blasphemy, adultery, and any other violations of God's temple. In chapters 4–5 he determines more particularly that three sins are irremissible: idolatry, adultery, and murder. He deduces this both from the words of the Decalogue and from the equality of these three sins (chapters 4–5). Moreover, he interprets several scriptural testimonies, such as the parables of the straying sheep, the lost drachma, and the prodigal son, as referring solely to baptismal remission and to pagans converted to the faith.

Chapter 19: "We ourselves do not depart from that distinction of sins from which we started. For John recommended it when he showed that there are certain sins of daily occurrence, to which we all are liable. Who indeed does not happen to be angry unjustly and beyond the setting of the sun, or to use violence, or readily to speak ill, or rashly to swear, or to break faith with an agreement, or to lie through shame or necessity? How often are we tempted in business, in our duties, in gain, in food, in sight, in hearing! If there were no pardon for these things, salvation would be open to no one. For these there will therefore be pardon through Christ, the intercessor with the Father. But there are sins contrary to these, more grievous and more ruinous, which are incapable of pardon: murder, idolatry, fraud, denial, blasphemy, and certainly adultery and fornication, and any other violation of the temple of God. For these Christ will no longer be an intercessor. Whoever has been born of God will not commit these, nor will one be a future son of God if he has committed them [he cites 1 John 5:16 and Jeremiah 7:16; 11:14; 14:11]. ... [For they are] a sin unto death. Thus nothing remains but either to deny that adultery and fornication are mortal sins or to confess that they are irremissible, sins for which prayer is not even permitted" (PL 2, 1073 f.).

Chapters 4–5: "We may therefore, according to the distinction laid down, return to the consideration of the sins themselves, whether they are such as can obtain pardon from all. ... [The law of the Decalogue], after forbidding superstition toward strange gods and the making of their idols, after enjoining the reverence of the Sabbath, after commanding, in the case of parents, the reverence next after that due to God, considered no other precept more worthy to be confirmed under such titles than: 'Thou shalt not commit adultery' (Exodus 20:14). What sin do you understand that God has placed immediately after idolatry? Nothing is second in distance from what is first, nothing so close to the first as the second; what proceeds from the first is in a certain way itself first. Thus adultery is akin to idolatry, and idolatry itself is often reproached to the people under the name of adultery and fornication (Jeremiah 3:1 f.; Ezekiel 16:15 f.). Perhaps it is even joined to it in its lot, as in its class, and will cleave to it in condemnation, as it does in arrangement. Furthermore, after 'Thou shalt not commit adultery,' He adds: 'Thou shalt not kill'; He has thereby placed murder next to adultery. In the very forefront, therefore, of the most holy law, among the chief headings of the heavenly edict, you recognize the principal sins marked out for proscription, according to their place, order, boundary, and respective merit" (PL 2, 1038 f.).

Chapter 18: "That mercy of God, which prefers the repentance of a sinner to his death, looks to those who are still ignorant and still unbelieving, for whose deliverance Christ came, not to those who already know God and have learned the sacrament of faith. Since, then, God's mercy still belongs even to infidels, it both invites them to penance and offers them mercy through penance; without prejudice, however, to that kind of penance after faith, which will be able to obtain pardon from the bishop for lesser sins, but for greater and irremissible sins from God alone" (PL 2, 1070).

5. He reproaches Catholics for declaring idolatry and murder irremissible while absolving adultery.

Chapter 5: "An idolater comes; a murderer comes; in their midst stands an adulterer. Equally they sit in the office of penance, shudder in sackcloth and ashes, lie prostrate in the same filth, are beset by the same prayers, supplicate on the same knees, invoke the same mother. What are you doing, most gentle and humane discipline? Either you must be such to all—for 'Blessed are the peacemakers' (Matthew 5:9)—or else, if not to all, such as ours. Do you condemn idolatry and murder once for all,

but except an adulterer from their midst, gathering to yourself a successor to idolatry and a predecessor to murder?" (PL 2, 1040 f.).

Chapter 12: "Neither for idolatry nor for bloodshed is peace restored by the Churches" (PL 2, 1055).

These words, in their generality, are evidently false and calumnious, both from Hermas (cited above), from Tertullian himself (*On Penance*, chapter 7, cited above), and from Hippolytus accusing Callistus (cited below). Nevertheless, it is probable that this had occurred in some Churches and that the ecclesiastical discipline concerning the reservation of the three capital sins had varied. It is certain, moreover, that peace with the Church was sometimes denied for certain graver sins until the moment of death; indeed, many eminent theologians admit that even at the moment of death it could be denied, as will become evident from what is said in the proper place.

6. At the end of the work, in chapter 21 (cited above, pp. 46 f.), he attacks with all his strength the very power of the keys in which Catholics chiefly took pride; indeed, he does so in such a way that, while affirming it in words, he actually transfers it from the Catholic hierarchy to the "Church of the Spirit," that is, to the assemblies of the Montanists.[81]

[81] D'Alès, *De Sacr. Poenitentiae*, thesis 2 (Paris, 1926), p. 28.

Several scholars say that he does not deny the power itself, but only its extension to more grievous sins, since in chapter 18 (cited above) he says that "pardon for lesser sins can be obtained from the bishop" (in chapter 13, moreover, he shows that the bishop presides over *exomologesis*). Likewise, they say he does not deny its extension to all mortal sins, but only to the capital sins, since in chapter 19 (cited above) he numbers among remissible sins being angry beyond sunset, using violence, speaking ill, swearing rashly, and breaking one's pledged word.

Nevertheless, although Tertullian's principal intention in this book *On Modesty* is to defend against the decree of Callistus the irremissibility of impurity (and consequently of idolatry and murder and, in general, of sin unto death), the conclusion at which he arrives at the end of the book is the very denial of the power of remission in the hierarchy of the Church.

For in chapter 21 he openly teaches the following: the power of remitting sins committed against God does not belong to the hierarchy of the Church. This power is indeed given within the Church, but it is a special charism belonging to certain holy persons, such as the power of performing miracles; and although it is found among the Montanists, it ought not even there to be exercised, lest it become an occasion and an encouragement to sin (whence, according to him, Catholic martyrs absolve unlawfully and indeed lack the charism: chapter 22). Peter himself possessed this power only personally. The hierarchical Church can remit only, by reason of doctrine, ministry, and discipline, sins committed against man, for in Peter's person we are commanded to forgive offences seventy times seven.

Hence, if Tertullian is consistent with himself, by the above-mentioned faculty of the bishop to absolve lesser sins he understands, not the power properly so called, but the office of discipline and correction, which in some respect belongs to all Christians, according to the commandment to forgive fraternal offences (and so Tertullian says indifferently that pardon for lesser sins can be obtained "from the bishop" [chapter 18] or "from all" [chapter 4]). Likewise, by lesser sins he understands fraternal offences, which he generally considers slight, perhaps because they are not

directly against God and because they are "certain sins of daily occurrence to which we are all liable" (chapter 19, cited above).

7. In the book On Modesty Tertullian is an outstanding witness to the teaching of the Catholics of that age, both concerning the existence of the power of the keys and concerning its extent, precisely because he directly attacks this power and even retracts his former opinion; and in attacking and retracting it, he explicitly determines the meaning of Catholic doctrine.

The existence of the true power is chiefly indicated in chapter 3 ("They have arrogated to their own power pardon"), chapter 13 ("And you, indeed, when you bring an adulterer to penance, lead a brotherhood into the Church ... good shepherd and blessed pope"), chapter 18 ("Pardon can be obtained from the bishop"), and chapter 21 throughout, as well as in chapter 22 ("You pour out this power upon your martyrs"; "A martyr absolves adulterers and fornicators"; "Christ showed His power [by performing miracles] ... I may not believe in the same power in anyone without the same proofs"). Furthermore, this power is expressed throughout the book by the words "to absolve" (chapters 13, 14, 21, 22), "to restore," "to reconcile," "to grant indulgence," and "peace."

THE DECREE OF CALLISTUS.

This decree, in which, from the beginning of the second century onward, the hierarchical power of remitting sins, and implicitly its extension, are explicitly affirmed, is known directly from Tertullian's mention of it in *On Modesty*, chapter 1. He was exasperated by it and attacked it:

"I hear that an edict has even been issued, and a peremptory one at that: the Supreme Pontiff, that is, the bishop of bishops, declares: 'I remit the sins of adultery and fornication to those who have discharged penance.' O edict, to which one cannot ascribe, 'A good deed!' And where shall this generosity be proclaimed? On the very doors of lust, beneath the very titles of the lusts! There, where the offences themselves are committed, penance of this sort must be proclaimed; there, where the sinners themselves frequent, the pardon in which they hope must be displayed. But this is read in the Church and pronounced in the Church, which is a virgin! Far, far from the bride of Christ be such a proclamation. She who is true, chaste, and holy will not even have spots upon her ears. She has none to whom she may promise such things; and if she had, she would not promise them, since the earthly temple could have been called by the Lord a 'den of robbers' (Matthew 21:13), but not a den of adulterers and fornicators" (PL 2, 1032 f.).

On the author and, consequently, on the authority of this decree there is a threefold opinion among scholars.

Formerly it was commonly ascribed to Pope Zephyrinus (A.D. 199–217), on account of Tertullian's words just quoted, "Supreme Pontiff ... bishop of bishops" (likewise, in chapter 13: "Good shepherd and blessed pope," and in chapter 21: "Apostolic").

Now it is more commonly attributed to Pope Callistus (A.D. 217–222; the book *On Modesty* was written in A.D. 220), both because of the foregoing words of Tertullian (especially "Apostolic") and his other allusions to the chair of Peter in chapter 21, and, above all, because of the *Philosophumena* of St. Hippolytus, discovered and published at Oxford in 1851. In this work that exceedingly bitter adversary of Callistus accuses the pope of affirming that "all sins are forgiven by him" (see below).[82]

[82] So Rossi first thought, *Bollettino di archeologia cristiana* (1866), p. 26, and later Harnack, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* (1878 †), vol. 2, p. 582, followed by several scholars; see D'Alès (who argues for the probable opinion), article

"Zéphyrin, Calliste ou Agrippinus," in *Recherches de science religieuse* (1920), pp. 212 ff.; *De sacr. Poenitentiae* (Paris, 1926), pp. 26, 30, 32; Funk; Preuschen; Batiffol (who argues for the certain opinion).

A few scholars deny that the decree was that of any pope, and ascribe it instead to Agrippinus, bishop of Carthage. For, they say, the expressions just mentioned ("Supreme Pontiff," "Blessed pope," etc.) were not at that time peculiar to the Roman pontiff (in Epistle 2 among the letters of Cyprian, PL 4, 228, Cyprian himself is called "blessed pope" by the Roman clergy), and they are used ironically by Tertullian (as is evident from "Good shepherd and blessed pope"). Furthermore, from chapter 21 it appears that the bishop whom Tertullian attacks is the bishop, not of the Roman Church, but of another Church "near to Peter"; for he says there: "You presume that the power of loosing and binding has also been derived to you, that is, to every Church near to Peter" (compare the whole passage cited above on pp. 46 f.). And in *On Prescription* 32 he says that even those Churches which were founded by no apostle are "accounted no less apostolic by virtue of a kinship of doctrine," because they are bound to the apostolic Churches by the same faith (PL 2, 53).[83]

[83] Among these are Orsi, Morcelli, Gieseler, G. Bardy, "L'édit d'Agrippinus," in *Revue des sciences religieuses* (1924), pp. 1–25; and P. Galtier, *Le véritable édit de Calliste*, in *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique de Louvain* (1927), pp. 469–475; "Ecclesia Petri propinqua," ibid. (1928), pp. 41–51; *De Paenitentia* (Paris, 1931), pp. 163 ff.; *L'Église et la rémission des péchés* (Paris, 1932), pp. 141–183.

CALLISTUS († 222) AND HIPPOLYTUS († circa 235).

Whatever may be said about the attribution of the decree mentioned above, from the following words of Hippolytus accusing Callistus[84] (setting aside, however, his manifest exaggerations and falsehoods), it can be gathered that the teaching of Callistus was that the Church possesses the power of absolving, and indeed of absolving all sins, even apostasy, adultery, and murder. Hippolytus, on the other hand, does not deny this power of the Church, but merely complains vehemently about the manner and facility with which, according to him, pardon was granted to sinners by Callistus, so that, in order to win the favour of the people, he implicitly gave them licence to sin under the assurance of easy pardon.

[84] Batiffol, *Études d'histoire et de théologie positive* (Paris, 1926), pp. 102–107, teaches that these accusations of Hippolytus explain various articles of the decree of Callistus. Galtier maintains the contrary, *L'Église et la rémission des péchés* (Paris, 1932), pp. 181–183.

Hippolytus, Philosophumena, 9, 12, 4–6: "After the death of Zephyrinus, [Callistus] judged that he had obtained what he had been seeking [that is, succession to the pontificate]. ... He was ... an impostor and shrewd in deceit, and as time went on he carried many away with him. This impostor, making such attempts, established a school opposed to the Church by teaching in this fashion; and he was the first who dared to grant men the things that lead to pleasures, saying that all sins were forgiven by him.

"For if perhaps someone who meets with another who assembles [the faithful] and is called a Christian has committed any sin, they say that the sin is not imputed to him, provided he joins the school of Callistus. Many who embraced this ruling, stung by conscience and at the same time rejected by many sects, and some also expelled from the Church by us through condemnation, crossed over to them and filled his school. He laid down that, even if a bishop should sin, even unto death, he ought not to be removed from his position. In his time bishops, presbyters, and deacons who had married twice and three times began to be admitted to orders. Indeed, if someone already

established in an order should marry, such a man was to remain in the order as though he had not sinned; alleging in this connection the saying of the Apostle: 'Who are you to judge another man's servant?'

"He also said that the parable of the tares pertained to this: 'Let the tares grow with the wheat,' that is, sinners within the Church. He also said that Noah's ark was made as a likeness of the Church, in which there were dogs and wolves and ravens, and all clean and unclean creatures; so he maintained that the same ought to be the case in the Church. And whatever he could collect to this end, he interpreted in this manner. His hearers, delighted with his doctrines, continue to deceive themselves and many others, crowds of whom flock to that school. Consequently, they increase in number, glorying in the crowds on account of pleasures which Christ did not permit; and, holding Him in contempt, they forbid no sin, saying that He forgives those who wish it.

"For he also permitted women, if they were unmarried and burning with passion at an age unfit for marriage, or if they did not wish to lose their rank by a lawful marriage, to have as a concubine any man they chose, whether slave or free, and to keep him as a husband without being lawfully married. Thereupon women who were called faithful began to use drugs that produce sterility, and bands for procuring abortions, because they did not wish to bear a child by a slave or a man of lower station, on account of their relatives and excessive concern for family property. See to what a degree of impiety that wicked man has advanced, teaching adultery and murder together! And amid these undertakings those shameless persons venture to call themselves the Catholic Church, and some, thinking that the matter is well managed, give them their support. In his time, too, rebaptism was first attempted by them.

"These, then, are the marvellous things which the most admirable Callistus established; his school remains, preserving its customs and tradition, making no distinction as to with whom communion ought to be held, but offering communion to everyone indiscriminately. From him they have also drawn their name, so that, after Callistus, the leader of these practices, they are called Callistians" (Kirch, *Enchiridion historiae ecclesiasticae*, nos. 231–233).

What Hippolytus himself held is clearly shown from his *APOSTOLIC TRADITION* (1, 7), in which, in the prayer for the consecration of a bishop, God is entreated to grant him the power which was given to the Apostles of remitting sins and loosing every bond of iniquity.

From this *Apostolic Tradition*, which is probably the original work of Hippolytus himself, derive several liturgical works[85], written between the third and fifth centuries and attributed to him, such as the *Egyptian Church Order* and the *Canons of Hippolytus*, which in turn are sources of the *Apostolic Constitutions* (around A.D. 400). Now in all these works the same teaching mentioned above is constantly and faithfully handed down, and is expressed thus in the *APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTIONS*, 8, 5, 7:

[85] Cf. *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, article "Hippolyte," cols. 2502–2504.

"Grant him, O almighty Lord, through Thy Christ, participation in the Holy Spirit, that he may have the power 'of remitting sins' according to Thy command, of assigning clerical offices according to Thy precept, and 'of loosing every bond' according to the power which Thou hast bestowed on the Apostles" (Funk, 1, 477).

Ibid., 2, 11, 1 ff., and 12, 1: "Therefore, O bishop, strive to be blameless in your works, and acknowledge your place, because you have been set in the power of the Almighty, preserving the likeness of Almighty God. And thus, in the Church, sit and deliver the word as one having authority to judge on behalf of God those who have sinned; for to you bishops it has been said through the Gospel: 'Whatever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven.' Judge, O bishop, with authority as God does; but receive penitents with charity, as [Almighty] God does, and reprove, entreat, and teach, for the Lord God has promised with an oath that He will grant pardon to sinners" (ibid., 46–48).

Another work of the same kind, the *DIDASCALIA OF THE APOSTLES*[86] (written in Greek in the third century, probably in Syria), 2, 18, 1 ff., similarly has:

[86] According to Funk (*Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum*, vol. 1, preface, Paderborn, 1905), the *Didascalia Apostolorum* is the source of books I–VI of the *Apostolic Constitutions*.

"Let the bishop take care ... of those who have sinned, that they may do penance, and grant them remission of sins. ... You therefore, O bishop, teach and correct and loose through remission; and recognize your place as the place of Almighty God, and that you have received the power of remitting sins; for to you bishops it has been said: 'Whatever you shall bind ...'" (Funk, 1, 64).

Ibid., 2, 41, 1 ff.: "If someone afterwards, having been converted, shows fruits of penance, then admit him also to prayer as a Gentile. Therefore, just as you baptize a Gentile and afterwards receive him, so also lay your hand upon this person, while all pray for him; and then bring him in and make him a participant of the Church; and the laying on of hands shall be to him in place of Baptism. For either through the laying on of hands or through Baptism they receive participation in the Holy Spirit" (ibid., 128–130).

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA (circa A.D. 150–211), in *Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?*, 42, recounting the conversion and absolution of a most wicked robber through John the Evangelist (cf. above, p. 96), shows at least what the faithful of that time thought concerning the power of the keys and its extent. Moreover, in *Stromata*, 2, 13, he makes his own the teaching of Hermas concerning postbaptismal penance.

ORIGEN (circa A.D. 185–254) expressly affirmed the Church's power of remitting all sins, appealing to the words of the promise (Matthew 16:18 ff.) and of institution (John 20:22 ff.), and also to those things said in the Epistle to the Corinthians about the absolution of the incestuous man. What he says, however, in *On Prayer*, 28, 8–10, where at first sight he seems to deny the extension of this power to the three capital sins, presents only an apparent difficulty.

On Psalm 37, homily 2, 6: "Consider more diligently to whom you ought to confess your sin. First examine the physician to whom you ought to set forth the cause of your illness, one who knows how to be infirm with the infirm [cf. 2 Corinthians 11:29], to weep with those who weep [cf. Romans 12:15], and who understands the discipline of sympathy and compassion; so that at length, if he says anything, he who first has shown himself both a skilled physician and merciful, if he gives any counsel, you may carry it out and follow it. If he has understood and foreseen that your infirmity is such as ought to be exposed to and cured before the assembly of the whole Church, whereby perhaps others also may be edified and you yourself may readily be healed, this must be arranged with much deliberation and the sufficiently experienced advice of that physician" (PG 12, 1386).

On Luke, homily 17: "If we have sinned, we ought to say: 'My sin I have made known to Thee, and my iniquity I have not hidden; I said: I will declare against myself my injustice to the Lord' [Psalm 31:5]. For if we do this and reveal our sins, not only to God, but also to those who can heal our wounds and sins, our sins will be blotted out by Him who says: 'Behold, I shall blot out your iniquities as a cloud, and your sins as a mist' [Isaiah 44:22]" (PG 13, 1846).

On Leviticus, homily 2, 4, having enumerated six ways of obtaining remission of sins—namely, Baptism, martyrdom, almsgiving, the forgiving of fraternal offences, the conversion of a sinner from his evil way, and the fervour of charity toward God—adds: "There is also a seventh remission of sins, though hard and laborious, through penance, when the sinner washes his bed with tears, and his tears become his bread day and night, and when he is not ashamed to disclose his sin to the priest of the Lord and to seek a remedy, according to him who says: 'I said: I will declare against myself my injustice to the Lord, and Thou hast remitted the wickedness of my heart' [Psalm 31:5]. In this is fulfilled also what James the Apostle says: 'If any one is sick among you, let him call in the presbyters of the Church, and let them lay hands upon him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him' [James 5:14]" (PG 12, 417).

Against Celsus, 3, 51: "Such is the procedure toward those who sin and especially those who give themselves over to licence, that [Christians] exclude them from their community. ... They lament as lost and dead to God those who have fallen through lust or any other crime; and they lead them, as though raised from the dead, if they have effected a change of conduct of which an account ought to be taken. Yet they are admitted later than those who are received for the first time; and, because they have fallen after professing religion, they are excluded from every dignity and office of leadership in the said Church of God" (CB 1, 247).

On Prayer, 28, 8–10: "We all therefore have the power of remitting sins committed against us, as is evident also from these words: 'As we also forgive our debtors.' ... But he in whom Jesus has breathed, as in the Apostles, and who can be known by his fruits to have received the Holy Spirit, and to have become spiritual by the Spirit of God, being led by the Spirit of God, after the manner of the Son of God, toward all things that ought to be done according to reason, forgives those sins which God would forgive, and retains incurable sins, ministering—as the prophets ministered to God, speaking not their own words but those which were of the divine will—to God, who alone has the power of remission.

"Thus they have in the Gospel according to John what is written concerning remission granted by the Apostles: 'Receive the Holy Spirit: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose you shall retain, they are retained.' If these words are received without examination, the Apostles would seem to be accused, because they do not remit sins to all, so that remission is not granted to all, but they retain the sins of certain persons in such a way that on their account they are retained even before God.

"It will be useful, however, to take an example from the Law, so that those things which constitute remission of sins by God to men through men may be understood. The priests of the Law are forbidden to offer sacrifice for certain offences, so that the offences are remitted for those on whose behalf sacrifices are offered. Nor will a priest who has the power to remit certain involuntary sins, or to offer sacrifice for offences of negligence, therefore offer a holocaust or a sin-offering for adultery,

voluntary murder, or any other more grievous crime. So likewise the Apostles, and the priests who are like the Apostles, instructed in the discipline of divine worship according to the great High Priest, know for what sins and when and how they ought to offer sacrifice; and they also know on behalf of whom they ought not to offer. Therefore the priest Heli, knowing his sons Ophni and Phinees to be sinners, as though he could not bring them aid toward the remission of sins, declares in despair that even this could be done, in the words: 'If a man sin against a man, they shall pray for him. But if he sin against the Lord, who shall pray for him?'

"There are some who—I know not how—claim for themselves what is above the priestly dignity, perhaps being even inexperienced in priestly discipline, and boast that they can even pardon idolatry and remit adulteries and fornications; as though, provided they prayed for those who had perpetrated crimes of that sort, even what is a sin unto death would be absolved. For they do not read: 'There is a sin unto death; not for that do I say that anyone should ask'" (Kirch, *Enchiridion historiae ecclesiasticae*, nos. 243–246).

To certain critics, even among Catholic scholars, it has seemed that in this last passage Origen denies the extension of the Church's power to capital sins, that is, sins unto death (among which he explicitly mentions impurity, idolatry, and murder).

Nevertheless, Origen teaches more than once that absolutely all sins can be remitted by the Church (cf. *On Exodus*, 6, 6; *On Psalm 37*, homily 1, 1; *On Ezekiel*, homily 3, 8; *On Jeremiah*, homily 19, 9; *Against Celsus*, 3, 51, cited above); and in the passage just quoted from *On Prayer* he expressly says that the priest "forgives those sins which God would forgive." Moreover, he teaches more than once that difficulty in remitting sins arises not from a lack of power in the Church but from a lack of disposition in the sinner himself, on account of which fitting satisfaction is required (in *On John*, tome 2, 6; 28, 13; *Letter 4 to Serapion*, 10; *On Jeremiah*, homily 15, 5; *Against Celsus*, 3, 51, cited above). In the very passage quoted he expressly says that the priest "forgives those sins which God would forgive and retains incurable sins," and he disapproves the arrogance of those who think that more grievous sins can be remitted without examination and with easy pardon, "as though, provided they prayed for those who had perpetrated crimes of that sort, even what is a sin unto death would be absolved." He adds that this manner of proceeding can by no means be proved from the words of institution (John 20:23); otherwise "the Apostles would seem to be accused, because they do not remit sins to all ... but retain the sins of certain persons."

Hence Origen legitimately sets forth a twofold restriction: the Church does not have the power of remitting incurable sins, that is, sins which, on account of the indisposition of the subject, God Himself would not remit; and, in the case of more grievous sins, the sinner's disposition is not to be judged lightly, nor is pardon to be granted readily and without suitable satisfaction.

CYPRIAN (circa A.D. 200–258) most clearly asserted the doctrine concerning the power of the keys in the controversy over granting remission to those who had lapsed in the persecution of Decius, from which the controversy with Novatianism subsequently arose.

Here let there be certain testimonies concerning the power of the Church itself, leaving for their proper place those which refer directly to the extent of that same power.

On the Lapsed, 16: rebuking certain sinners who, without suitable examination and satisfaction, extorted a false pardon and peace from certain presbyters, he says: "Before their offences have been

expiated, before confession of the crime has been made, before the conscience has been cleansed by the sacrifice and hand of the priest, before the offence against the indignant and threatening Lord has been appeased, violence is done to His body and blood; and they sin more against the Lord with their hands and mouth than when they denied the Lord" (ML 4, 493).

Ibid., 28 ff., he adds: "How much greater in faith and better in fear are those who, though bound by no crime of sacrifice or of a certificate, nevertheless, because they have even thought of such a thing, confess this very matter sorrowfully and simply before the priests of God, make confession of their conscience, lay bare the burden of their soul, and seek a salutary remedy even for small and moderate wounds, knowing that Scripture says: 'God is not mocked' [Galatians 6:7]. God cannot be mocked and circumvented, nor deceived by any deceitful craftiness. ... Let each one confess his offence, I beseech you, dearest brethren, while he who has offended is still in this world, while his confession can be admitted, while satisfaction and remission made through the priests is acceptable before the Lord. Let us turn to the Lord with our whole mind; and, expressing repentance for our crime with true sorrows, let us implore the mercy of God" (ML 4, 503 ff.).

From these passages it is understood that Cyprian by no means rejects the Church's power (but only the arbitrary procedure of those who readily granted pardon, as though they could bestow indulgence by their own power), when, in the same work, 17, he says: "Let no one deceive himself, let no one mislead himself. The Lord alone can show mercy. He alone can grant pardon for sins committed against Him, He who bore our sins, who suffered for us, whom God delivered up for our sins. Man cannot be greater than God; nor can a servant by his own indulgence remit or grant what has been committed against the Lord as a more grievous offence, lest the fallen man add this to his crime, if he does not know that it has been foretold: 'Cursed is the man who puts his hope in man' [Jeremiah 17:5]. The Lord must be entreated, the Lord must be appeased by our satisfaction, He who says that He will deny the one who denies Him, who alone has received all judgment from the Father" (ML 4, 494 ff.).

Precisely the same doctrine recurs in the *Letters* of Cyprian. Compare *Letter* 9, 2, and *Letter* 10, 1 ff., where he says: "But now I learn with the greatest sorrow of mind not only that the divine precepts are not suggested to you there, but rather that they are hindered, so that those things which are done by you yourselves, both cautiously and with due honour toward God, are undone by certain presbyters, who consider neither the fear of God nor the honour of the bishop ...; before penance has been performed, before confession has been made, before the hand has been laid upon them in penance by the bishop and clergy, they dare offer on behalf of them and give them the Eucharist—that is, to profane the holy body of the Lord—although it is written: 'Whoever shall eat the bread or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord' [1 Corinthians 11:27]. Pardon can indeed be granted to the lapsed in this matter. Who, when dead, would not hasten to be made alive? Who would not hurry to attain his own salvation? But it belongs to those set over them to retain the precept, and to instruct those who are hurrying or ignorant, lest those who ought to be shepherds of the sheep become butchers" (ML 4, 260).

Letter 52, 29 (to Antonianus): "It is to close and cut off the way of sorrow and penance, when in all the Scriptures the Lord, who calls back those who turn to Him and do penance, speaks soothingly, that by our hardness and cruelty, while the fruit of penance is intercepted, penance itself should be taken away. But if we find that no one ought to be forbidden to do penance, and that peace can be granted

to those who entreat and implore the mercy of the Lord, in accordance with the fact that He is merciful and kind, the groaning of those who lament must be admitted, and the fruit of penance must not be denied to those who sorrow. And because among the dead there is no confession, nor can confession be made there, those who have repented with their whole heart and entreated the Church ought in the meantime to be received into the Church" (ML 3, 819).

The granting of peace, of which the holy Doctor speaks, is not merely reconciliation in the external forum, but consists in the conferring of grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Cf. ibid., 13, and *Letter* 54, 4, where he says: "How can one be found prepared or fit for confession, who, before receiving peace, has not received the Spirit of the Father ...?" (ML 3, 885).

FIRMILIAN († 269), writing against Pope Stephen in *Letter* 75, 16, among the *Letters* of Cyprian, says: "What an error, indeed, and how great the blindness of the man who says that remission of sins can be given in the synagogues of heretics [through Baptism, namely], and does not remain upon the foundation of the one Church, which has been established by Christ upon the rock! From this it can be understood that Christ said to Peter alone: 'Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven' [Matthew 16:19]; and again in the Gospel, when Christ breathed upon the Apostles alone, saying: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose you shall retain, they are retained' [John 20:22–23]. Therefore the power of remitting sins [by whatsoever means, whether through Baptism or through Penance] belongs to the Church, which they established, having been sent by Christ, and to the bishops who succeeded them by vicarious ordination" (ML 3, 1216 ff.).

Ibid., 4: "For this reason it necessarily happens among us that every year we, the elders and those set over the Church, come together as one to arrange those matters which have been entrusted to our care, so that, if there are matters of greater importance, they may be directed by common counsel, and that for our brethren who have lapsed, and who after the saving washing have been wounded by the devil, a remedy may be sought through penance; not as though they obtain remission of sins from us, but that through us they may be converted to the understanding of their offences and may consider how more fully to make satisfaction to the Lord" (ML 3, 1206).

From the preceding text it is understood that Firmilian here denies only that power of the Church which would be proper to the Church itself, or not essentially instrumental and ministerial.

DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA, bishop († circa 265), in his *Letter to Fabius, bishop of Antioch* (in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 6, 42, 5 ff.), shows that the power of remitting sins resides properly in the hierarchy: "These divine martyrs, who are now seated with Christ, sharers in His kingdom and participants in His judgment, and who shall judge together with Him, received some of the brethren who had lapsed and had been convicted of sacrificing to idols; and seeing their conversion and penance, and judging that it could be pleasing to Him who desires the repentance of the sinner rather than his death, they admitted and gathered them together and received them into their company, and communicated with them in prayers and food. What then, brethren, do you advise us about these? What ought we to do? Shall we agree to the judgment of the martyrs and preserve the grace granted by them, and treat kindly those whom they followed with mercy? Or shall we make their judgment void, and make ourselves examiners and judges of their decision, grieve their clemency, and overturn the established order?" (Kirch, *Enchiridion historiae ecclesiasticae*, no. 311).

In the fourth century, against the Novatian heresy, Ambrose (circa A.D. 340–397), especially in his book *On Penance*, and Pacian († circa 390), in his first letter to the Novatian Sympronian and in his third letter against the treatises of the Novatians, set forth more fully and explicitly the doctrine concerning the Church's power and its extent.

We have quoted their principal words above (pp. 47 ff. and 77). Furthermore:

PACIAN, Letter 3 (Against the Treatises of the Novatians), 7 ff.: "But you ask, you penitent [that is, you Novatian], whether I remit sins, since it is nevertheless permitted to you in Baptism to release sin. Certainly not I, but God alone, who both forgives what has been committed in Baptism and does not reject the tears of penitents. Moreover, what I do, I do not by my own right but by that of the Lord. ... Therefore, whether we baptize, or compel to penance, or release pardon to penitents, we act with Christ as the author. It remains for you to see whether Christ can do this, whether Christ has done this.

"If it had been possible for remission of sins to be granted to penitents, you say, Baptism would not have been necessary. A very foolish comparison! For Baptism is the sacrament of the Lord's passion; the pardon of penitents is the merit of the one who confesses. All can attain the former, because it is the gift of God's grace, that is, a free gift; but the latter is the labour of a few, who rise again after a fall, who recover after wounds, who are aided by tearful cries, who revive after the death of the flesh" (ML 13, 1068).

By these last words the holy Doctor does not deny what he asserted immediately before, namely, that through Penance as through Baptism the Church forgives sins by the power and in the name of Christ; he merely inculcates the difference between this remission in the two sacraments, according to the aforementioned distinction of the Fathers (p. 94) between simple and laborious remission (*aphesis* and *metanoia*).

AMBROSE, On Penance, 1, 8, 34–37: "The Lord wills that His disciples should be able to do very much; He wills that those things which He Himself did while upon earth should be done by His servants in His name [John 14:12]. Finally He says: 'And greater things than these shall you do' [ibid.]. He granted them that they should raise the dead [Matthew 10:8]. ... He gave all things to His disciples, of whom He says: 'In My name they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover' [Mark 16:17–18]. He therefore gave all things; but in none of these things is there any power belonging to man, where the grace of a divine gift is in force.

"Why then do you lay on hands and believe that the work of blessing is efficacious, if one who is sick should recover? Why do you presume that anyone can be cleansed from the defilement of the devil through you? Why should it not be lawful that sins be forgiven through a man? For in Baptism too there is certainly remission of all sins. What difference is there whether priests claim this right for themselves through Penance or through the washing? The mystery is one in both. But you say that in the washing the grace of the mysteries operates. What of Penance? Does not the name of God operate? What then? When you wish, you claim for yourselves the grace of God; when you wish, you repudiate it?" (ML 16, 497 ff.).

In the fourth and fifth centuries the other Fathers likewise report the same doctrine dogmatically, also significantly exhibiting the judicial character of the power of the keys.

APHRAATES († middle of the fourth century), Demonstrations, 7, 3 ff.: "He who has been struck by Satan ought not to be ashamed to confess his offence, to abandon it, and to seek penance as a remedy. ... You, therefore, physicians, who are the disciples of our illustrious Physician, ought not to deny medicine to those who need healing. Whoever discloses his wound to you, apply to him the remedy of penance; but urge the one who would be ashamed to reveal his sickness not to conceal it from you; and when he has disclosed it to you, do not make it public, lest, on his account, the innocent be judged guilty by enemies and by those who hate us" (*Patrologia Syriaca*, Graffin–Nau, 1, 318).

Ibid., 7, 11: "Hear also, you who hold the keys of the gates of heaven, and open the doors to penitents" (ibid., 329).

EPHREM (circa A.D. 306–373), Against Heresies, Sermon 2, attacking the Manichaeans, who usurped the power of the keys and readily granted pardon for sins, says: "For He gave His disciples the power to cleanse the sins of human nature through water only once; and He permitted them to loose and to bind, so that he who is bound may seek from Him, who pardons all things, who indeed forgives all things, amid our sorrow. For it is fitting that he who has sinned in pleasure should be afflicted" (in Rouët de Journel, *Enchiridion Patristicum*, no. 727).

From these words H. Ch. Lea[87] somewhat uncritically concludes that the holy Doctor thought the Church did not possess the power of the keys, but that he denounced its usurpation by the Manichaeans. For a little before Ephrem himself, in the same Syrian Church, Aphraates had expressly affirmed that power; furthermore, in the words cited, Ephrem manifestly distinguishes between the faculty of baptizing and the faculty of loosing and binding. His statement that man is cleansed only once through water is true, both because Baptism is unrepeatable and because, according to the Fathers' manner of speaking (cf. above, p. 94), in Baptism alone there is simple and gratuitous remission, purification, and renewal (*aphesis*), whereas in Penance there is laborious remission and healing (*metanoia*).

[87] In his work *A History of Auricular Confession* (Philadelphia, 1896), vol. 1, p. 114.

HILARY (circa A.D. 315–366), On Matthew, chapter 18, no. 8: "But to inspire dread of the greatest fear, so that all might be restrained in the present, He set before them the unchangeable judgment of apostolic severity, so that those whom they bound on earth—that is, left entangled in the bonds of sins—and those whom they loosed—that is, received to salvation by the confession of pardon [cf. Matthew 18:18]—these, by the condition of the apostolic judgment, would likewise be either loosed or bound in heaven" (ML 9, 1021).

CHRYSOSTOM (circa A.D. 344–407), On the Priesthood, 3, 5 ff.: "Those who dwell upon the earth and make their abode upon it have been entrusted with the administration of things which are in heaven; they have received a power which God gave neither to angels nor to archangels. For it was not said to them: 'Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven' [Matthew 18:18]. Those who exercise command upon earth indeed have the power of binding, but bodies only; whereas this bond reaches the soul itself and transcends the heavens; and whatever sentence the servants pronounce, the Lord Himself confirms. What else, then, has He given them but the whole power of heaven? For He says: 'Whose

sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose you shall retain, they are retained' [John 20:23]. What power could be greater than this? 'The Father has given all judgment to the Son' [John 5:22]; and I see that the Son Himself has handed all of it over to them. ...

"To cleanse bodily leprosy—or rather, not to cleanse it at all, but merely to ascertain whether it had been cleansed—was permitted to the priests of the Jews [Leviticus 14]; and you know how greatly the priestly dignity was then disputed. But these have received the power not merely to ascertain, but actually to cleanse, the uncleanness of the soul. ... For God has given them a power greater than that of parents, not only in punishing, but also in doing good; and there is as great a difference between the two as between the present life and the life to come. For parents beget us unto this life, but priests unto the life to come; and the former cannot ward off bodily death or repel an impending disease, whereas the latter have often saved the soul when it was sick and on the point of perishing. ... For not only can they forgive sins when they regenerate us, but they can also pardon sins committed after regeneration. For [James] says: 'Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him' [James 5:14–15]" (MG 48, 643 ff.).

On the words "I saw the Lord" (Isaiah 6:1), Homily 5: "The priestly throne is placed in heaven, and possesses authority to administer heavenly things. Who says this? The King of heaven Himself: 'Whatsoever you shall bind ...' Why should this honour be bestowed? It takes the chief authority of judgment from earth to heaven. For the judge sits upon earth, the Lord ratifies the sentence of His servant; and whatever he judges in the lower regions, the Lord confirms in the regions above. Therefore the priest stands midway between God and human nature" (MG 56, 131).

JEROME (circa A.D. 342–419), Letter 14, 8: "Far be it from me to say anything adverse of those [clerics] who, succeeding to apostolic rank, consecrate the body of Christ with their sacred mouth, through whom we also are Christians; who, holding the keys of the kingdom of heaven, in a certain fashion judge before the day of judgment; who preserve the Bride of the Lord in sober chastity" (ML 22, 352).

On Matthew, book 3, chapter 16, verse 19: "'And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven.' Bishops and presbyters, not understanding this passage, assume something of the pride of the Pharisees, imagining that they can either condemn the innocent or absolve the guilty, whereas before God it is not the sentence of the priests, but the life of the accused, that is examined. We read in Leviticus of lepers, who are commanded to show themselves to the priests; and if they have leprosy, they are then declared unclean by the priest [Leviticus 14:2–4]: not because priests make men leprous and unclean, but because they have knowledge of leprosy and of what is not leprosy, and can discern who is clean and who is unclean. Therefore, just as the priest there makes the leper clean or unclean, so here the bishop and presbyter binds or looses not those who are innocent or guilty, but, in accordance with his office, when he has heard the varieties of sins, he knows who is to be bound and who is to be loosed" (ML 26, 122).

Dialogue Against the Luciferians, 5: "The priest ... lays his hand upon the subject, invokes the return of the Holy Spirit, and thus, by prayer, reconciles to the altar him who had been handed over to Satan

for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved; nor does he restore to health in the presence of the people one member alone, as formerly, but all the members together" (ML 23, 167).

AUGUSTINE (A.D. 354–430), On the Creed (Sermon to Catechumens), 1, 7, 15, and 8, 16: "Because of all sins Baptism was instituted; because of slight sins, without which we cannot be, prayer was instituted. What does prayer contain? 'Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors' [Matthew 6:12]. Once we are washed in Baptism, we are washed daily by prayer. But do not commit those sins on account of which it is necessary to be separated from the body of Christ; far be that from you. For those whom you see doing penance have committed crimes, either adulteries or certain enormous deeds; on this account they perform penance. For if their own sins were slight, daily prayer would suffice to wipe them away. ... Therefore sins are forgiven in the Church in three ways: in Baptism, in prayer, and in the greater humility of penance" (ML 40, 636).

The City of God, 20, 9, 2: "[John], recapitulating what the Church does during these thousand years, says concerning her: 'And I saw thrones, and those who sat upon them, and judgment was given to them.' This must not be understood as referring to the last judgment, but to the seats of those who preside and to those presiding who sit upon them, by whom the Church is now governed. And no better interpretation of the judgment given to them seems possible than that which was said: 'Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven' [Matthew 18:18]. Hence the Apostle says: 'For what have I to do to judge them that are without? Do not you judge them that are within?' [1 Corinthians 5:12]" (ML 41, 673).

On the Christian Combat, 31, 33: "Nor should we listen to those who deny that the Church of God can forgive all sins. And so the wretched men, while they do not understand the rock in Peter and refuse to believe that the keys of the kingdom of heaven were given to the Church, have themselves lost them from their hands" (ML 40, 308).

Enchiridion, 64 ff.: "After the commemoration of the holy Church, the remission of sins is placed in the order of the Confession [of faith]. For through this the Church which is on earth stands; through this what had perished and was found does not perish [Luke 15:24]. Except, indeed, for the gift of Baptism ... except for the great indulgence from which a man's renewal begins, whereby every guilt contracted by birth and added thereafter is forgiven, even the rest of life, lived in the use of reason at an age however fruitful in righteousness, is not passed without the remission of sins [that is, without penance]. ... But not even concerning sins, however great, should the mercy of God be despaired of in the holy Church, by those who do penance according to the measure of each one's sin. In the performance of penance, however, when such a thing has been committed that the one who committed it should be separated from the body of Christ, the measure of time is not so much to be considered as that of sorrow. For God does not despise a contrite and humbled heart [Psalm 50:19]. But because the sorrow of one person's heart is very often hidden from another and does not come to the knowledge of others through words or any other signs, although before Him to whom it is said, 'My groaning is not hidden from Thee' [Psalm 37:10], those who preside over the Church rightly establish times of penance, so that satisfaction may also be made to the Church itself, in which these very sins are forgiven; for outside her they assuredly are not forgiven. For she herself has properly received the Holy Spirit as a pledge [2 Corinthians 1:22], without whom no sins are forgiven, so that those to whom they are forgiven may consequently obtain eternal life" (ML 40, 262 ff.).

Sermon 295, 2 ff.: "Peter merited to represent the person of the whole Church. Because he alone bore the person of the whole Church, he merited to hear: 'To thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven' [Matthew 16:19]. For it was not one man, but the unity of the Church, that received those keys. Hence Peter's excellence is proclaimed, because he bore the figure of the universality and unity of the Church, when it was said to him, 'To thee I give,' which was given to all. For lest you think that the Church did not receive the keys of the kingdom of heaven, hear in another place what the Lord says to all His Apostles: 'Receive the Holy Spirit'; and immediately: 'Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose you shall retain, they are retained' [John 20:22–23]. This pertains to the keys, of which it was said: 'Whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven.' But He said this to Peter. That you may know that Peter then bore the person of the whole Church, hear what He Himself said to all the faithful saints: 'If thy brother shall sin against thee ...' [Matthew 18:15–18]. The dove binds, the dove looses; the building founded upon the rock binds and looses.

"Let those who are bound fear; let those who have been loosed fear. Let those who have been loosed fear lest they be bound; let those who have been bound pray that they may be loosed. ... And apart from this Church nothing is loosed. To a man four days dead it is said: 'Lazarus, come forth.' And he came forth from the tomb, bound hand and foot. The Lord called him out, so that even the dead man might come forth from the tomb; if He touches the heart, the confession of sin comes forth. But he is still bound to some extent. Therefore, after Lazarus had come out of the tomb, the Lord said to His disciples, to whom He had said: 'Whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven': 'Loose him, and let him go' [John 11:43–44]. Of Himself He raised him; through the disciples He loosed him[88]" (ML 38, 1349 ff.).

[88] On this comparison with the raising of Lazarus, compare the passages mentioned in the note on p. 13.

Sermon 351[89]*, 4, 9:* "Whoever, then, is held bound after Baptism by the acts of certain former evils—is he so hostile to himself that he still hesitates to change his life, while there is time, while he thus sins and lives? ... Entangled, therefore, in such deadly bonds of sins, does he refuse, or defer, or hesitate to have recourse to those very keys of the Church, by which he may be loosed on earth, so as to be loosed in heaven; and does he dare to promise himself any salvation after this life merely because he is called a Christian? ... Let a man, therefore, judge himself in these dispositions, while he can, and change his conduct for the better. ... Let him come to the bishops, through whom in the Church those keys are administered; and, as one already beginning to be a good son, let him receive the measure of satisfaction from the guardians of the mysteries, in accordance with the order of the Church's members: so that, devoted and suppliant in offering the sacrifice of a contrite heart, he may nevertheless do what will profit not only himself in receiving salvation, but others also by example. But if his sin consists not only in his own grave evil, but also in such scandal to others, and if it seems expedient for the good of the Church that the bishop know of it, and that it be known to many or even to the whole people, let him not refuse, let him not resist, and let him not, through shame, add to the deadly wound a tumour" (ML 39, 1545).

[89] Certain more recent critics, such as Portalié (in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, article "Augustin," col. 2310), think this sermon to be apocryphal, as being foreign to the style of the holy Doctor. Nevertheless, it is beyond controversy that the sermon at least relates the doctrine of Augustine himself. Cf. K. Adam, *Die kirchliche Sündenvergebung nach dem heiligen Augustin*, pp. 7–9; and Batiffol, *Études d'histoire et de théologie positive*, Paris, 1926, pp. 337–362.

Sermon 352, 2, 7; 3, 8 ff.: "I have proposed that there are three kinds [of penance] in the holy Scriptures. ... The first belongs to those who are to come to Baptism. ... There is also another, daily penance. And where do we show that daily penance? I have no better place to show it than in the daily prayer, wherein the Lord, teaching us to pray, showed what we should say to the Father, and placed in these words: 'Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors' [Matthew 6:12]. ...

"There remains a third kind of penance. ... It is a more grievous and sorrowful penance, in which those who are properly called penitents in the Church, removed even from participation in the sacrament of the altar, incur the judgment that they may not eat and drink unworthily. This, then, is a sorrowful penance. The wound is grave: perhaps adultery has been committed, perhaps murder, perhaps some sacrilege; a grave matter, a grave wound, deadly and mortal. Yet the physician is almighty. ... What says the Lord to His Church? 'Whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven' [Matthew 18:18]. Thus, when Lazarus had come forth, because the Lord had fulfilled the good work of His mercy by calling forth the dead man, already putrefying, to confession, He then fulfilled the rest through the ministry of the Church: 'Loose him, and let him go' [John 11:39–44]. ... Therefore the pagans are accustomed to insult Christians concerning the penance established in the Church; and against certain heresies the Catholic Church has maintained this truth concerning penance to be performed. For there were those who said that penance should not be granted for certain sins; and they were excluded from the Church and became heretics. In no sins whatsoever does the tender-hearted mother Church lose the bowels of mercy" (ML 39, 1556–1559).

On Christian Doctrine, 1, 18, 17: as cited above on p. 77.

On Baptism, 3, 18, 23: as cited above on p. 85.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA († 444), On John (20:23), 12, 1: as cited above on p. 85.

*INNOCENT I (A.D. 401–417), Letter 25, 7, 10, to Decentius, bishop of Gubbio: "*As to penitents, however, whether they are doing penance for more grievous offences or for lesser ones, if no illness intervenes, the custom of the Roman Church shows that they are to be reconciled on the Thursday before Easter. But it belongs to the priest to judge the weight of their offences, so that he may take account of the penitent's confession and of his tears and weeping, and may bid him be released when he has seen his satisfaction to be fitting. But if someone falls into illness and has come even to the point of despair, he is to be released before Easter, lest he depart from this world without Communion" (Kirch, *Enchiridion historiae ecclesiasticae*, no. 727).

LEO THE GREAT (A.D. 440–461), Letter "Sollicitudinis": as cited above on pp. 61 ff.

GELASIUS I (A.D. 492–496), Tome "Ne forte": as cited above on p. 62.

GREGORY THE GREAT (A.D. 540–604), Homilies on the Gospels, book 2, homily 26, 4–6: sums up most aptly the tradition of the preceding Fathers, saying: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose you shall retain, they are retained." It is fitting to consider to what heavy burdens of humility those disciples were called, and to what summit of glory they were raised. Behold, not only are they rendered secure concerning themselves, but they also receive the power to release the obligations of others; and they obtain the sovereignty of the judgment above, so that in God's place they retain the sins of some and release the sins of others. Thus it was fitting that God should raise up those who, for God's sake, agreed to such deep humility. Behold, those who fear the strict

judgment of God become judges of souls, and those who feared being condemned themselves condemn others and set them free.

"Now assuredly the bishops hold their place in the Church. Those who receive the office of government take up the authority of binding and loosing. Great is this honour, but heavy the burden of that honour. It is indeed hard that one who does not know how to keep the reins of his own life should become a judge of another's life. And it frequently happens that the one who occupies this place of judgment has a life by no means in harmony with that place. Then it often comes about that he either condemns the undeserving or looses others while he himself remains bound. ...

"The causes, then, must be weighed, and only then must the power of binding and loosing be exercised. It must be seen what fault has gone before, or what penance has followed after the fault, so that those whom almighty God visits with the grace of compunction may be absolved by the sentence of the shepherd. For the absolution of the one presiding is true when it follows the decision of the inward Judge. The raising of the four-days-dead man well signifies this; for it shows that the Lord first called and restored the dead man to life, saying: 'Lazarus, come forth' [John 11:43], and afterward he who had come forth alive was loosed by the disciples. ... Behold, the disciples now loose him who is alive, whom the Master had raised when dead. For if the disciples were to loose Lazarus while dead, they would show forth an evil odour rather than power. From this consideration we must understand that by pastoral authority we ought to loose those whom we know our Author to have brought to life by quickening grace. This quickening, before the working of righteousness, is already recognized in the confession of sin itself" (ML 76, 1199 ff.).

SECONDLY. TWO PRINCIPAL TOPICS WHICH ESPECIALLY MANIFEST THE MIND OF THE FATHERS CONCERNING THE EXISTENCE OF THE POWER TO REMIT SINS IN THE HIERARCHY ARE THE COMPARISON THEY MADE BETWEEN BAPTISM AND PENANCE, AND THE THREEFOLD CONTROVERSY OF THE MONTANISTS, THE LAPSED, AND THE NOVATIANS.

The comparison between Baptism and Penance recurs more than once among the Fathers cited above, both with respect to the effect of each sacrament and with respect to the power of the Church (which, however, is of a different kind) exercised in each. For they maintain that in both sacraments true remission of sins is obtained, and indeed through the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Comparison with respect to the effect.

The Fathers commonly say that in Baptism remission takes place in the simple sense (*aphesis*), but in Penance by a laborious process (*metanoia*). According to Augustine, it is more proper to say that renewal takes place in Baptism alone, whereas healing takes place in Penance.

HERMAS speaks of postbaptismal penance; he affirms that through Penance the seal of Baptism, broken by sin, is renewed.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA calls it a second penance.

IRENAEUS says that God gives life to some from the beginning, and to others through penance.

TERTULLIAN calls it renewed health, the restoration of what was received in Baptism, a second hope, a second penance, a repeated benefit, a second plank of salvation, and second helps.

THE DIDASCALIA OF THE APOSTLES says that the imposition of hands is for the penitent in place of Baptism.

ORIGEN distinguishes between remission of sins through Baptism and through Penance.

PACIAN says that after Baptism forgiveness can be granted to one who does penance for sin, and that sins can be absolved in the baptized as in the unbaptized.

AMBROSE teaches that in Baptism as in Penance there is one and the same mystery of the remission of sins.

EPHREM says that through Baptism the soul is purified of sins once, whereas through Penance it is loosed or bound.

CHRYSOSTOM maintains that sins are remitted not only in baptismal regeneration, but also afterward through Penance.

JEROME says that through Baptism men become Christians, while through Penance they are judged and preserved chaste.

AUGUSTINE teaches that sins are remitted in three ways: through Baptism, prayer, and Penance; that, apart from Baptism, sins are forgiven only through Penance; and that one who has sinned after Baptism must have recourse to the keys of the Church.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA says that sins are remitted in two ways, through Baptism and Penance.

LEO THE GREAT says that grace and the remission of sins are conferred not only through Baptism but also through Penance.

Comparison with respect to the power of the Church.

PACIAN says that the Church can forgive sin after Baptism, just as she previously forgave it through Baptism. The power of bishops relates both to catechumens who are to be baptized and to baptized persons who are to be absolved. If, according to the Novatians, the power of loosing ought to be assigned to the Apostles alone, the power of baptizing ought likewise to be assigned to them alone.

AMBROSE says against the Novatians that, if the right of baptizing is granted to priests, the right of absolving ought also to be granted to them, since "there is one mystery in each," namely, the faculty of remitting sins.

EPHREM teaches that Christ gave His disciples the power of cleansing sins through Baptism and of loosing through Penance.

CHRYSOSTOM says that God gave priests a power greater than that of parents, because they not only beget us through Baptism, but also heal us of sins through Penance.

JEROME teaches that through Christian priests men first become Christians, and afterward are judged and preserved chaste.

AUGUSTINE teaches in the Creed that after mention of the Church comes mention of the remission of sins, because by that remission, which takes place in Baptism and Penance, the Church subsists; and that the person who sins after Baptism ought to have recourse to the keys of the Church.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA says that priests remit sins in two ways, namely, through Baptism and Penance.

Certain Fathers (cited above on pp. 81 and 84 ff.) connect these two powers of the Church so intimately that they speak of them as though they were one and seem almost to confuse them, deriving both indiscriminately from the same texts of Matthew and John; hence, as Ambrose aptly says, "there is one mystery in each."

The threefold controversy of the Montanists, the Lapsed, and the Novatians.

The principal matter at issue in this controversy was whether the hierarchy could remit sins in the internal forum, and especially the more grievous offences, which were regarded as sins simpliciter.

Tertullian and the Novatians vehemently denied this, and claimed that Catholics themselves taught the same thing. Accordingly, these heretics, constrained by the evidence of the words of Scripture, conceded such a power only to spiritual men, as a particular charism of the kind conferred for working miracles. Moreover, the matter itself is evident from the very principle invoked by the heretics: that God Himself must remit sins. The Catholics replied that nothing prevents this from being done through men, by the right and in the name of God; nor does this occur otherwise in Baptism. Hence the power to baptize and to absolve must either both be rejected or both admitted.

In vain do the adversaries object to certain texts of the Fathers in which the remission of sins is ascribed either to the work of the penitent himself or to the good dispositions of the sinner (Firmilian, Letter 75, 4; Pacian, Letter 3, 7 ff.; Jerome, On Matthew, 3, 16, 19), or to God alone, as though the right of remitting sins could not be exercised by men (Origen, On Prayer, 28, 8, 10; Cyprian, On the Lapsed, 28 ff.; Firmilian, Letter 75, 4; Pacian, Letter 3, 7; Ambrose, On Penance, 1, 8, 35; Jerome, On Matthew, 3, 16, 19; Augustine, Sermon 295, 3; Sermon 352, 3; Cyril of Alexandria, On John, 12, 1; Gregory the Great, Homily 26 on the Gospels, 2, 6).

For the same Fathers, and indeed usually in the very passages cited by the objectors, reply by explicitly affirming the Church's power to remit sins.

The meaning, therefore, of the expressions objected to is this: the exercise of this power is fruitless where sufficient dispositions are lacking on the part of the sinner; these dispositions must be more laborious than in Baptism; and the power must not be exercised lightly or arbitrarily without suitable examination of those dispositions. Nor is it to be understood otherwise than as secondary and ministerial. All this, moreover, follows from the context of the very passages objected to, as we observed above in treating Origen, Cyprian, Firmilian, and Pacian.

Moreover, the comparison put forward by Augustine and Gregory between the absolution of priests and the loosing of the bonds of Lazarus by the disciples at his resurrection does not mean, as certain persons falsely interpret it, that God alone remits sin and confers the life of grace, while priests merely signify this effect or absolve from punishment alone; rather, it means that God first directly stirs sinners toward good dispositions and afterward, through priests, confers the remission or loosing of the bonds of sin, as Augustine himself expressly declares, saying: "Of Himself He raised him; through the disciples He loosed him" (Sermon 295, 3). Of this matter, moreover, we shall speak again below, in the question concerning the effect of this sacrament.

THIRDLY. THE ARGUMENTS BY WHICH THE LIBERALS ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH THEIR THEORY APPEAR FUTILE.

As is evident from the brief exposition of their doctrine given in the Negative Part (pp. 53 ff.), the adversaries assert three things:

First, the Church at its origin was not hierarchical but pneumatic; moreover, it consisted of saints alone, so that the existence of sin and its remission had not yet been taken into consideration. Likewise, if such remission ever did occur, and if certain documents prior to the third century are understood in this sense, it was certainly attributed not to the hierarchy itself, but to the pneumatics alone.

Second, when the constitution of the hierarchy had developed, the power of the keys was acknowledged to belong to it, but only in the external forum.

Third, this power developed into a right in the internal forum only much later.

Now the second and third assertions appear manifestly false from the testimonies of the Fathers cited above; for all of them, beginning with the *Didache*, treat of penance and of the remission of sins in the internal forum, and there is no indication whatever of the alleged development from remission in the external forum to remission in the internal forum. But the first assertion, upon which the adversaries seem to place the greatest confidence, has nothing but a specious foundation. For:

That there was a hierarchy in the primitive Church, and indeed in the apostolic Church, is proved in the treatise *On the Church*, and is clearly apparent from the few documents related above, both from St. Paul (pp. 86–90) and from the Tradition of the first and second centuries (pp. 91 ff.).

It is, moreover, by no means denied that charisms abounded in the apostolic age (cf. 1 Corinthians 12 and 14), and that charismatics or pneumatics exercised great influence, so that they themselves not infrequently designated the hierarchs to be elected (cf. 1 Timothy 1:18; 4:14; Acts 13:1–5), and were quite commonly chosen for hierarchical offices (cf. Acts 13:1–5). Hence the charismatic Church by no means excludes the hierarchical Church; on the contrary, it is ordered toward the perfection of the latter.

That, in the primitive Church, and indeed in the apostolic Church, notwithstanding a greater purity of life and a lesser need for penance, the existence and remission of sins among the baptized themselves were directly taken into consideration is clearly apparent from what Scripture says concerning Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1 ff.), Simon Magus (Acts 8:20–23), the incestuous Corinthian (1 Corinthians 5:1–13), Diotrephes (3 John 9 ff.), the angels of the churches (Apocalypse 2:1 ff.), the Nicolaitans (Apocalypse 2:6, 15), the woman Jezebel (Apocalypse 2:20 ff.), and various sinners (Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 15; James 5:15 ff., 19 ff.; 2 John 10 ff.; Jude 4, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16, 18, 19, 22). The mind of the earliest Church is manifested in the exhortation of James (5:16), "Confess therefore your sins one to another," which is repeated in the *Didache* (4:14): "In the Church you shall confess your sins," and is developed throughout the whole book of the *Shepherd of Hermas*.

The documents prior to the third century, from the Epistles of the Apostles (especially those of Paul to the Corinthians) down to Irenaeus, sufficiently declare that the remission of sins was not reserved to pneumatics but was carried out by those who presided over the Church, as we showed above in examining the individual texts.

The adversaries, on the other hand, adduce certain documents of the later Church which, they say, are traces of an ancient practice and indications of the primitive Church's belief that the power to remit sins was reserved to pneumatics. Namely:

a. According to the Fathers, not only those who preside, but the entire Church together with them, is considered to judge concerning sins to be absolved or retained. Thus Tertullian (*On Penance*, 9 and 10), Cyprian (Letter 11, 1, to the people; Letter 13, 2, to the clergy; Letter 55, 15, to Cornelius), Ambrose (*On Penance*, 1, 15, 80), Pacian (Letter 3, 12), and Augustine (Sermon 296, 11 ff.; *Tractates on John*, 58, 5).

Reply.

As is evident from the very doctrine of these Fathers, the parts attributed to the whole Church in the absolution of the lapsed in no way refer to the power of absolving itself, which is ascribed to the rulers alone, but rather to the prayers whereby the penitent is helped before God by the brethren, and to the consent of the people, by which those presiding over the Church are, as it were, strengthened and invited to impart absolution. By this participation of all the faithful in the reconciliation of sinners, that mystery of the body was carefully fostered and aptly expressed, whereby in one member the others also are persecuted, suffer, are weakened, and are restored.

b. The martyrs are acknowledged to have had the faculty of reconciling sinners to the Church and of granting them letters of peace. This is apparent from Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History*, 5, 1 ff.), who says of the martyrs of Lyons (second century) that they "absolved all and bound no one"; from Tertullian, who, while still a Catholic, says in *To the Martyrs*, 2: "Some have been accustomed to request peace ... from the martyrs," but later, as a Montanist, thus reproaches the Catholic Church in *On Modesty*, 22: "You pour out this power upon your martyrs"; "The martyr absolves ... grants pardon for offences"; from Cyprian, in whose letters concerning the question of the lapsed and those furnished with letters of peace (cf. Letters 9–24, 27, 30, according to the edition of Migne), the martyrs are said "to grant peace," "to send peace," "to remit sin," and "to command that peace be given and sins remitted" (Letters 16; 21, 2; 20, 3; 22, 3; ML 4, 276, 277, 284, 293); and from Dionysius of Alexandria (Letter to Fabius, cited above on p. 115), who says that the Alexandrian martyrs had pronounced judgment concerning the lapsed and had granted them the grace of reconciliation.

Reply.

From the context itself of the passages objected, it is evident that the aforesaid practice of the martyrs did not imply the exercise of the power of remitting sins (still less, therefore, the exclusion of such a right in the hierarchs), but only intercession and recommendation, so that pardon might more readily be granted to the lapsed by those who presided.

Among the martyrs of Lyons there is commended merely the kindness and charity which they showed toward all, especially toward the lapsed and their persecutors.

The words of Tertullian the Catholic concerning the martyrs' entreaty for peace must be understood no otherwise than what he says elsewhere about the entreaty which a penitent also directs to the other faithful in the Church, insofar as, "casting himself at the knees of God's beloved ones, he lays upon all the brethren the obligations of his supplication" (*On Penance*, 9; ML 1, 1354 ff.). But the

words of Tertullian the Montanist plainly have the character of a calumny against the Catholic Church.

The material found in Cyprian's letters clearly shows that the letter of peace, granted by the martyrs, was a letter by which the lapsed were commended to those presiding over the Church, so that they might obtain pardon from them. In Letter 16, the martyr Lucian says to Cyprian: "Know that we have granted peace to all those concerning whom an account has been established before you of what they have done after their offence." In Letter 21, 2, the same Lucian, writing to Celerinus who had entreated him on behalf of his lapsed sisters, says: "When the case has been laid before the bishop and confession has been made, let them have peace." In Letter 11, 1, Cyprian says: "Certain blessed martyrs have written letters to us, asking that their wishes be examined." In Letter 12, 1, Cyprian prescribed that pardon should be granted to the lapsed who were in danger of death, "that, with hands imposed upon them for penance, they may depart to the Lord with the peace which the martyrs desired should be given in letters addressed to us."

Especially noteworthy is what the Roman clergy write against those furnished with letters of peace and demanding reconciliation (Letter 30, 1 ff.): "We were indeed sufficiently astonished that they should wish to go so far as, so urgently and at so untimely and distressing a time, amid so great and immense a crime and offence, not so much to request peace for themselves as to claim it as their right, and even to declare that they already possessed it in heaven. If they possess it, why do they ask for what they hold? But if the very fact that they ask proves that they do not possess it, why do they not await the judgment of those from whom they thought peace—peace which they certainly do not possess—must be requested? ... If the martyrs thought that peace should be given to them, why did they not themselves give it? Why did they think that they should be referred, as they say, to the bishop? For he who orders something to be done can certainly do what he orders. But, as we understand it—or rather as the matter itself declares and proclaims—the most holy martyrs thought that restraint and the modesty of truth were to be observed in both respects. For because they were urgently pressed by many, while they referred them to the bishop, they thought that their own modesty should be respected, lest they be further troubled; and, since they did not themselves communicate with them, they judged that the unblemished sincerity of the evangelical law was to be preserved" (ML 4, 311–313).

From the very words of Dionysius of Alexandria it is evident that the sentence of those martyrs concerning the reconciliation of the lapsed was not regarded as definitive and properly so called, since he expressly signifies that it was within his discretion "to render their judgment void."

c. In the Eastern Church of later centuries (from the time of Iconoclasm onward) the custom gained ground of confessing sins to monks not distinguished by the priesthood; indeed, certain Eastern monks taught that the power of absolving was a charism granted by God to holy men independently of the hierarchy.

Reply.

Such an abuse, which we mentioned above (pp. 49 ff.) and whose limits must not be exaggerated,[90] cannot be adduced as an indication of the practice of the primitive Church. For, long before monasticism arose, the office of absolving from sins was regarded as hierarchical in the doctrine and practice of the Church. Basil himself, the founder of monasticism in the East, prescribes in his Rules

that confession be made to priests, according to the ancient custom of the Church: "Sins must be confessed to those to whom the dispensation of the mysteries of God has been entrusted. For thus we find that those who formerly did penance did so before the saints" (*Shorter Rules*, 288; MG 31, 1284). The same holy Doctor ordained his brother Peter to the priesthood, that he might be confessor of the monastery of his sister St. Macrina (cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of St. Macrina*; MG 46, 973).

[90] Generally, monks, to whom it is said that for several centuries the ministry of confession was almost exclusively transferred, were presbyters. By reason of the holiness of their lives, their exceptional learning, and the honour of the celibate state, they won for themselves a greater confidence among the people than secular presbyters.

Symeon the New Theologian (cited above, pp. 49 ff.), the foremost among the aforesaid monastic theologians, explicitly teaches that the power of absolving was at first hierarchical, and only afterward, owing to the corruption of the hierarchy, passed to the monks themselves.

Proof 3. FROM THE ARGUMENT OF FITTINGNESS.

The institution of a power to remit the sins committed after Baptism is fitting:

First, to the manner of action of Divine Providence, which gently adapts itself to the nature and character of things. For it is fitting that man should depend upon other men, constituted in authority, also in the attainment of salvation; likewise, that creatures which have been the occasion of sin and perdition should also become an instrument of reparation.

Second, to the character of the Church, inasmuch as she was instituted to continue and apply the redemptive action of Christ. For since Christ instructed His Church in the means of salvation by which the redemptive virtue of His Passion would be applied, it is scarcely probable that He left her without the power to remit sins, in which redemption chiefly consists, especially when it is considered that He granted her elsewhere the faculty of washing away sins through Baptism. But with both powers admitted, the mystery of Mother Church is fully understood: as she begets the faithful for Christ through the womb of Baptism, so she restores them to life through the breasts of Penance.

Third, to the character of Baptism, inasmuch as it entails a means of remitting sins that cannot be repeated. For it would not readily be understood why the salvific and redemptive will of God should establish a single and unrepeatable means for the remission of sins *ex opere operato*, since this is certainly no less necessary to sinners after Baptism than before it, nor is it less necessary for a man to be restored than to be begotten. Baptism and Penance thus mutually call for each other, as two parallel and complementary means of salvation.

Fourth, to the character and perfection of the New Testament. For, once a power of remitting sins properly so called is admitted in the Church, it is fully understood why in the Old Testament the remission of sins was promised only as a future event (cf. Jeremiah 31:33 ff., cited in Hebrews 10:16–18). For although even in the Old Testament penance was preached by the prophets, and remission was granted by God to penitents, this was nevertheless not there accompanied by any properly so-called power to be exercised by men. Hence both the dignity of the Church in comparison with the Synagogue and the efficacy of Christ's Passion—from which all the efficacy and all the power of the sacraments of the New Law are founded and derived—are especially commended.

CONCLUSION II. THE POWER OF RETAINING AND REMITTING SINS IS PROPERLY JUDICIAL.

Proof 1. FROM SCRIPTURE, or from the words of institution, John 20:23.

Judicial power involves three things: namely, not merely *power* (which is also found in a legate or an arbiter), but *jurisdiction* properly so called (the right to pronounce the law or to impose an obligation); nor just any jurisdiction, but jurisdiction that is *sentential and judicative* (the pronouncing of judgment, or the issuing of a binding judgment). Its *object* is the relation of conformity or nonconformity between the norm of the law and the action of the subject, or between what ought to be done and what has been done. Its *act* is the pronouncement of a judgment concerning that relation, from which a juridical bond or obligation follows.

Now all these things are equivalently contained in the power of retaining and remitting sins conferred by Christ upon the Church. For inasmuch as it is a power of retaining, it implies not a merely negative non-remission, but a positive act of retention, or a positive act of jurisdiction, from which a certain obligation arises, or by which the obligation of submitting sins to the keys continues to subsist.

Moreover, although this power is in itself one and indivisible, it has two members and is by its nature disjunctive—that is, it must be exercised in one direction or the other (by remitting or by retaining). And since it cannot be exercised according to a man's arbitrary choice, but in accordance with the divine law, which necessarily requires fitting dispositions of penance for the remission of sin, it follows that it is sentential and judicative; that is, it consists in the examination of the subject's case and the pronouncement of a judgment by which the bond of sins is either loosed or retained.

Billot speaks to the point: "Judicial power is, first of all, jurisdictional; then, by its very nature, it bears upon two opposite alternatives, and needs, in its exercise, to be determined to one of them by means of a judgment. Thus a judgment is needed not merely beforehand for the use of the power—as when someone, wishing to act prudently, deliberates whether he ought or is able to use the power entrusted to him or not to use it—but precisely in the exercise itself, as determining the exercise toward one or the other of the two opposite terms to which the power itself, considered in itself, is indifferently related."

"These things being granted, it must be considered that the power of remitting and retaining sins is not a twofold power, but one and indivisible, extending both to remission and to retention, as is manifest from the words of Christ. Furthermore, remitting and retaining are not opposed as affirmation and negation, but rather as two positive acts; for *to remit* is to bring it about that guilt is loosed by the power of the keys, whereas *to retain* is to bind a man so that he becomes subject once again, by making the guilt remain, to the judgment of the keys. But if the jurisdictional power of Christ's ministers is one and indivisible, and by its nature bears upon two opposed terms, it must therefore be determined by judgment, in its exercise, to one or the other: and in this, as has been said, the nature of judicial power consists."[91]

[91] De Eccl. sacram., t. 2, thes. 1, § 2, Romae, 1907, p. 21.

From these considerations the *difference between the power of remitting sins in Baptism and in Penance* becomes clear; or, more precisely, the difference between Baptism and Penance in respect of the character of the remissive power involved in each sacrament.

First, baptismal power is ordered to remitting sin, *not to retaining it*; nor can the mere non-application of Baptism be called a retention of sin.

Second, baptismal power *is not judicial*: both because it is not two-membered, that is, directed either to remission or to retention, and because it does not essentially involve knowledge of a case and judgment upon it. For the judgment about the dispositions of the subject, both in Baptism and in other sacraments, is something *preceding* rather than something constituting the exercise of sacramental power, as it is in Penance.

Third, baptismal power *is not jurisdictional*, for it does not imply imposing any obligation and is exercised upon those who are not subjects, namely catechumens, who by Baptism itself become, for the first time, members and subjects of the Church.

Fourth, baptismal power *is not primarily and directly a power of remitting sins*; rather, it is the power of applying the baptismal rite, which is remissive of sins. Hence the remission of sin stands as a consequence in relation to the immediate object of baptismal power. By contrast, the power pertaining to Penance is primarily and directly a power of remitting sins, so that it constitutes the sacrament of Penance itself.

Confirmation.

1. From the words of promise, Matthew 16:19 and 18:18. For, as explained in Conclusion I (pp. 75 ff.), the metaphor contained in the words "to bind and to loose," together with the conferral of the "keys of the kingdom of heaven," implies a jurisdictional and judicial power. These matters are also contained in the context of the second passage in Matthew (18:15–17), that is, in the passage concerning fraternal correction, which concludes with the judgment of the Church (cf. pp. 73–76).

2. From what was said in Conclusion I (pp. 86–90) concerning the exercise of the power of binding and loosing by the Apostles, especially St. Paul.

Proof 2. FROM THE GENERAL INTERPRETATION OF THE CHURCH AND THE EXPLICIT TEACHING OF THE FATHERS.

From the very beginning the Church understood the power conferred upon her by Christ to be a genuinely judicial power. This is evident from the organization of penitential discipline, from the hearing and examination of the cases of sinners, from the distinction of the orders of penitents, and from the imposition and differentiation of the penalties to be undergone.

Tertullian, explaining what took place in the assemblies of the first Christians (*Apology*, 39), says: "There are also exhortations, corrections, and divine censure. For judgment is exercised with great weight, as among those who are certain of the sight of God; and it is the greatest foreshadowing of the judgment to come if anyone has offended so gravely as to be excluded from the communion of prayer, the assembly, and all holy intercourse" (ML 1, 532).

Cyprian, in various letters concerning the absolution of the lapsed (Letters 9–30), constantly insists upon the need to institute an orderly and careful judgment before peace and absolution are granted to the lapsed. Accordingly, he commands that nothing concerning the reconciliation of the lapsed be

decided during the persecution, but that the time of peace be awaited, so that the matter may be settled by mature deliberation.

Letter 10, 3, to the martyrs: "You also should carefully and cautiously weigh the desires of penitents, as friends of the Lord and as those who are afterwards to judge together with Him; you should examine the conduct, works, and merits of individuals, and consider also the kinds and qualities of their offences, lest, if anything be rashly and unworthily promised or done by us, our Church begin to blush even in the eyes of the pagans" (ML 4, 261).

Letter 22, 2, to the Roman clergy: "This matter [that is, the inconsiderate granting of a letter of peace by certain martyrs] brings greater ill will upon us, so that, when we have begun to hear and examine the cases of individuals, we may seem to deny to many what all now boast of having received from the martyrs and confessors" (ML 4, 291).

Letter 11, 1, to the people: "Divine mercy is able to provide a remedy [for the lapsed]. Yet I do not think that we should hasten, nor that anything should be done incautiously and precipitately, lest, while peace is presumptuously seized, the offence against divine indignation be more gravely provoked. Certain blessed martyrs have written letters to us, requesting that their wishes be examined. When, peace having first been granted to us all by the Lord, we begin to return to the Church, then each case will be examined, with you present and judging" (ML 4, 263).

The Fathers cited in Conclusion I (pp. 97 ff.) also speak explicitly of judicial power.

Tertullian: "Judgment is exercised with great weight" (*Apology*, 39, cited above).

Cyprian: "Each case will be examined ... with you judging"; "to hear and examine the cases of individuals" (Letters 11 and 22, cited above).

Hilary: "The judgment of immovable apostolic severity"; "the sentence of the apostolic decree" (*On Matthew*, 18, 8).

Chrysostom: "[The priest] sits as judge upon earth"; "that which he judges here upon earth" (Homily 5 *On the Words of Isaiah*, 1); "The Lord Himself ratifies the sentence of His servants" (*On the Priesthood*, 3, 5).

Ambrose: "The Lord gave to the Apostles what had previously belonged to His own judgment: that sins should be loosed by the authority of remitting, lest those that ought to be speedily loosed should long remain bound" (*On Psalm 38*, 37; ML 14, 1108).

Apostolic Constitutions: "You have the power of judging those who have sinned ... Judge, therefore, O bishop" (2, 11).

Jerome: "Possessing the keys of the kingdom of heaven, they judge in a certain manner before the day of judgment" (Letter 14, 8).

Augustine: In *The City of God*, 20, 9, 2, he refers the words of Apocalypse 20:4 to the rulers of the Church: "And I saw seats, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them"; he says: "No judgment seems better understood here than that of which it was said, 'Whatsoever you shall bind on earth ...' " To the ministers of the Church he applies the words of 1 Corinthians 2:15 (cf. p. 85): "But the spiritual man judges all things, and he himself is judged by no man."

Innocent I: "It belongs to the priest to judge from an estimation of the gravity of the offences" (Letter to Decentius).

Gregory the Great: "They obtain the primacy of the heavenly judgment, that in God's stead they may retain the sins of some and release those of others"; "Behold, they are made judges of souls"; "Cases must be weighed"; "They should pronounce the pastor's sentence of absolution upon them" (Homily 26 *On the Gospels*, 4–6).

Pseudo-Gregory (a disciple of Gregory, Claudius, abbot of Classe; died 601): In *On 1 Kings*, book 1, chapter 5, no. 13: "The affliction of penance for the removal of sins is then at length imposed, when the priest has issued a judgment, when, after the acts of those confessing to him have been examined, the burden of affliction is assigned to them in proportion to the offence" (ML 79, 207).

Proof 3. FROM THE ARGUMENT OF FITTINGNESS.

Judicial power is fitting:

First, to the character of the Church, since she was established as the minister of salvation in the form of a true society, with the threefold legislative, judicial, and coercive power. For Christ bestowed upon the Church judicial power in the external forum for the end of salvation; but judicial power in the internal forum is much more conducive to that same end. Therefore it is fitting that He should have bestowed this also upon the Church.

Second, to the character of Penance as conferred together with Baptism. For Penance, no less than Baptism, implies the exercise of power over those who are subjects of the Church. It is therefore fitting that it should be exercised over them formally as subjects, that is, jurisdictionally and judicially. Moreover, Baptism is conferred by way of generation, to which the person generated in no way contributes; but Penance is conferred by way of restoration, to which the very person who is restored contributes in a certain manner, namely by the operation of fitting dispositions, which call for the examination and judgment of the one absolving.

Third, to the condition of the sinner himself. For after the knowledge of the faith and baptismal regeneration, the sinner manifests greater ingratitude and malice, which naturally call for a more conspicuous sorrow and a more rigorous penance. Such penance is contained in the necessity of submitting oneself to the examination and judgment of the Church through confession and satisfaction. Moreover, this same necessity deters the sinner from committing new sins.

Note. The essence or character of this judicial power will be discussed in Chapter X, where the more universal power of the keys is treated.

CONCLUSION III. THE POWER OF RETAINING AND REMITTING SINS IS PROPERLY SACRAMENTAL; CONSEQUENTLY, PENANCE IS A SACRAMENT PROPERLY SO CALLED OF THE NEW LAW (articles 1 and 6).

Proof 1. FROM THE VERY NATURE OF THE JUDICIAL POWER to remit or retain sins, which is affirmed in Scripture and Tradition (article 1).

For a sacrament properly so called is a sign that confers grace, and thus involves two things: the character of a sensible sign and the conferral of grace connected with it. Now the power of the Church, insofar as it is a power of remitting sin, implies an influence upon the conferral of grace,

without which remission of sin cannot take place; and insofar as it is judicial, it implies a sensible sign, both whereby the sins and dispositions of the penitent may be expressed and made known, and whereby the sentence of the judge may be communicated.

St. Thomas speaks to the point: "As Gregory says,[92] 'a sacrament consists in a certain celebration, when an action is performed in such a way that something is understood to be signified which ought to be received as holy.' But it is evident that in Penance an action is performed in such a way that something holy is signified, both on the part of the penitent sinner and on the part of the priest who absolves. For the penitent sinner, by what he does and says, shows that his heart has withdrawn from sin; likewise the priest, by what he does and says with regard to the penitent, signifies the work of God in remitting sins. Hence it is evident that the Penance which is performed in the Church is a sacrament."

[92] These are the words of Isidore of Seville, taken from Augustine, as was said in the treatise On the Sacraments in General, article 1, p. 45.

Nor is it a valid objection against the sacramental character of Penance that no sensible thing is found in it, as there is, conversely, in the other sacraments, but only the actions of the penitent and the priest; nor that the sacraments are confected by a minister, whereas Penance consists chiefly in the acts of the penitent.

For, as was observed in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General*, article 4, and as will be said again below, where the matter and form of Penance and the nature of the sacramental dispositions themselves are treated, the acts of the penitent have the true character of a sacramental thing, that is, of a thing determinable in its character as a sign. Moreover, they have this character insofar as they fall under the action of the minister who applies the form (replies to objections 1 and 2).

Proof 2. FROM THE MIND OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH AND FROM TRADITION.

The mind of the ancient Church, as appears from the documents of Tradition cited especially in Conclusion I, is that the remission of sins and the accompanying conferral of grace are made dependent upon the external discipline of penance, and in particular upon a judicial sentence, by which the whole complex of that discipline was informed and determined, no less than regeneration in Christ was understood to depend upon the sensible rite of Baptism. Therefore the Church's understanding was that Penance, no less than Baptism, is a sign that confers grace, or a sacrament.

The mind of the Fathers is shown especially in their very *enumeration of Penance among the other sacraments*, sometimes even under the name of sacrament (although this word did not yet possess the proper and exclusive meaning which it subsequently acquired in the Church from Peter Lombard onward).

Novatian, in his letter written in the name of the Roman clergy to Cyprian (among Cyprian's letters, 31, 7, ed. Migne), speaking of the reconciliation of the lapsed, uses the word *sacrament* ("But all this within the sacrament"), though not yet in the determinate sense of a sacred rite.

Firmilian, in Letter 75, 7 (among Cyprian's letters), joins a manifest, though general, allusion to the penitential power with specific mention of Baptism, Confirmation, and Orders, saying: "All power and grace have been established in the Church, where those who are senior preside, who possess the

power both of baptizing, and of laying on hands, and of ordaining" (ML 3, 1209; compare these words with sections 4 and 16 of the same letter, cited above, p. 114 ff.).

Pacian, Letter 1, 6 (cited above, p. 77), enumerates three powers: that of baptizing, confirming, and absolving.

Ephrem: "The dispensers of the divine spiritual sacraments administer nourishment to all the children of the Church according to the condition of each, so that ... to penitents and to those standing outside the doors of the temple they offer chaff and barley" (*Works*, Syriac–Latin, Roman ed., I, 455).

Augustine, *On Baptism*, 5, 20, 28, under the name of sacrament enumerates Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, and the imposition of hands, which may be understood both of Orders and especially of Penance:[93] "If, then, what is said in the Gospel, 'God does not hear a sinner' (John 9:31), is applicable to this matter, so that the sacraments cannot be celebrated by a sinner, how does He hear a murderer praying, whether over the water of Baptism, or over the oil, or over the Eucharist, or over the heads of those upon whom hands are imposed?" (ML 43, 190).

[93] Cf. the same work, 3, 16, cited in the Introduction to the treatise, p. 4; also 5, 23, 33; Exposition of Psalm 146, 8, cited immediately below; Sermon 232, 7 ff.

Letter 228, 8, under the name of sacrament, joins Baptism and Penance: "To some who were longing for Baptism, to others for reconciliation, to others also for the performance of penance itself, and to all for consolation and for the confecting and distribution of the sacraments ... Some are baptized, others reconciled, and none are deprived of communion in the Lord's body" (ML 33, 1016).

Sermon 351, 4, 9 (cited above, p. 121): "Let [the penitent] receive from those who preside over the sacraments the measure of his satisfaction."

In the *Exposition of Psalm 146*, 8, he calls Penance—that is, contrition of heart and the imposition of the hands of those who preside—a sacrament: "Meanwhile, what does the physician do in this life? He binds up your bruises so that you may reach the fullest soundness, until what is broken is healed, and what has been bound up is made whole. What are these bandages? Temporal sacraments. The medicinal bandages of our contrition are sacraments, temporal for the present, by which we have consolation; and all the things that we say to you, the very things that sound and pass away, whatever is performed in the Church in a temporal manner, are bandages for the broken places. For just as a physician removes a bandage when perfect health has been restored, so in that city of Jerusalem, when we shall have been made equal to the angels, do you think ...

... that we shall there receive what we receive here? Or will the Gospel have to be recited to us there so that our faith may persevere? Or must hands be imposed by someone who presides? All these things are bandages for a fracture; when perfect health has been attained, they will be removed; but one cannot arrive at that health unless the bandages have been applied" (ML 37, 1903 ff.).

Innocent I, Letter to Decentius, speaking of Extreme Unction, says: "It cannot be poured upon penitents [or public sinners], because it is a kind of sacrament. For those to whom the remaining sacraments are denied, how is it thought possible to grant one kind?" (Denz. 99). The words "the remaining sacraments" refer to Viaticum and Penance, of which the holy Pontiff speaks immediately beforehand (cf. ML 20, 559), and in the letter to Exuperius (Denz. 95); nor were these granted indiscriminately to sinners.

Leo the Great, in his letter *Sollicitudinis* (cited above, p. 61 ff.), says that penitents, when properly disposed, are "to be admitted to the communion of the sacraments."

The *Gelasian Sacramentary*, 38, contains a prayer to God that He "admit to the sacrament of reconciliation" the sinner who has confessed and repented; and another that He "admit to the sacrament of reconciliation" those absolved from sins, "so that henceforth they may remain in sincere devotion to Thy sacraments" (ML 74, 1097 ff.). Then, at 40, it speaks of "the sacrament of baptism," of "the sacrament of perfect salvation and of viaticum," and of "receiving the mystery of the new sacrament [of the Eucharist]" (ML 74, 1097–1102).

Eligius, bishop of Noyon (seventh century; or an anonymous author), Homily 7: "The sacrament of reconciliation" (ML 87, 613).

Peter Damian (eleventh century), Sermon 58, near the end: "See how much I have been able ... to discuss concerning the sacrament of confession" (ML 144, 834).

Pseudo-Peter Damian (probably Nicholas of Clairvaux, middle of the twelfth century), Sermon 69: "There are twelve sacraments in the Church ... The first is the sacrament of Baptism ... The second is the sacrament of Confirmation ... The third is the unction of the sick ... The fourth is the consecration of the pontiff ... The seventh is the sacrament of confession ... The twelfth is the sacrament of marriage." Here an attempt is already being made to draw up a catalogue of the sacraments; but the first six sacraments mentioned above are enumerated in that catalogue, with the Eucharist omitted and only episcopal ordination expressly mentioned. Six other sacramentals, however, are added under the name of sacrament: the anointing of kings, the dedication of a church, the investiture of canons, the state of monks, the state of hermits, and the state of nuns.

Lanfranc (eleventh century), *On the Concealment of Confession*, near the beginning: "We carefully consider four ecclesiastical sacraments: faith, Baptism, the consecration of the Lord's body and blood, and the remission of sins. For by faith the Church is a mother, as the blessed ...

... Mary is a mother by the flesh; for what the one conceived by the Holy Spirit, the other believes in the Holy Spirit. She is not divided by the sacraments of Baptism, of the Lord's body and blood, and of the confession of sins ... Blessed, therefore, is the one and same mother Church in sacraments and in faith ... The Lord declared in His own person that there are three sacraments of confession: the figure of Baptism, one conscience out of two, and God and man in one judgment. In the figure of Baptism, the one who confesses renounces through penance and believes through faith, just as the one who is baptized renounces and believes ... Two consciences pass into one, namely that of the one confessing into the conscience of him to whom he confesses, and that of the one judging into the conscience of the same person who is judged ... God and man come together in the same judgment, because whoever judges himself already acts together with God" (ML 150, 625–627).

The theologians of the twelfth century, with the determinate meaning of the word *sacrament*, constructed a sevenfold catalogue of the sacraments, as was said in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General*, article 41 (pp. 515–517). In that catalogue, following the definitive arrangement handed down by Peter Lombard and afterward accepted by the Councils of Florence and Trent, Penance occupies the fourth place. Thereafter this sacrament is called a sacrament in the strict sense in the documents of the Church cited above (pp. 62 ff.), namely the Council of Verona in 1184, Innocent III,

the Fourth Lateran Council, the Second Council of Lyons, Constance, Florence, Trent, Pius X, and the Code of Canon Law.

Proof 3. FROM THE GENERAL ARGUMENT OF PRESCRIPTION,

which was brought against the Protestants in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General*, article 41 (pp. 520–522).

Proof 4. FROM THE ARGUMENT OF FITTINGNESS AND ANALOGY WITH THE OTHER SACRAMENTS (article 6; cf. question 65, article 1).

As was said in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General* (article 42), it was supremely fitting that God should institute sacraments, and this for the twofold end of perfecting man (the positive end) and bringing a remedy against the defect of sin (the negative end).

Now man is perfected in the spiritual life as in the natural life, not only in himself—that is, through generation, growth, and nourishment—but also incidentally, that is, through healing from infirmity into which he has fallen. Therefore, just as God instituted the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist for generating, increasing, and nourishing spiritual life, so it was equally fitting that He should institute the sacrament of Penance for restoring that same life from the infirmity of sin.

Again, the defect of sin in man is manifold: namely, the privation of spiritual life, the weakness of soul naturally present in the newly regenerated, the instability of the soul toward sin, and actual sin itself. Hence, just as God instituted the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist as remedies against the first three defects, so it was fitting that He should institute the sacrament of Penance as a remedy against actual sin.

This reason derives its principal strength from a comparison of Baptism and Penance; for since a man even after Baptism stands in just as much need of being healed from sin, there is no apparent reason why God should not have instituted, after unrepeatable Baptism, another means of healing, and one of the same sensible and sacramental character as the first remedy.

To this question may also be applied the other arguments of fittingness advanced in Conclusion I (pp. 130 ff.). Two arguments proposed by the Catechism of the Council of Trent may be added (cf. above, p. 68): namely, that through an external sacrament a man becomes more certain of having obtained the forgiveness of his sins, and that he is convinced by a manifest argument that he derives this forgiveness from the merits of Christ alone, upon whom all the efficacy of the sacraments depends.

CONCLUSION IV. THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE IS ADEQUATELY AND SPECIFICALLY DISTINCT FROM THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM (article 6).

Proof 1. FROM SCRIPTURE, or from the words of institution.

See above, Conclusion I (pp. 78–85).

Proof 2. FROM THE FATHERS.

See above, Conclusion I (pp. 83–85, 94–95, 99, 124–125). Moreover, the whole penitential practice of the Church, when compared with baptismal practice, very clearly shows the distinction and separation of the two sacraments.

Proof 3. FROM THE NATURE OF THE JUDICIAL POWER.

For, as was proved from Scripture and the Fathers in Conclusion II, the judicial power proper to Penance does not belong to Baptism (cf. what was said on pp. 131–133).

Proof 4. FROM A GENERAL COMPARISON OF BAPTISM AND PENANCE with regard to their various sacramental elements.

A sacrament considered metaphysically involves two things: the nature of a sign and the manner of conferring grace; physically, however, it involves four causes: material, formal, efficient, and final.

Now, although we have as yet determined nothing concerning the essence of the sacrament of Penance, nevertheless, from what can already be gathered in a general way from its very institution, it is manifest that the several sacramental elements belonging to Baptism by no means belong to Penance.

As regards the relation of sign and thing signified.[94]

Baptism is ordered to signifying spiritual regeneration, whereas Penance was instituted by Christ to signify the remission of sins.

[94] On this matter the Salmanticenses aptly dispute against the Protestants: On Penance, disputation 1, doubt 1, nos. 26, 27, 29, 30, 46 ff.

But regeneration and the remission of sins differ *formally*: for regeneration regards the life of grace first and in itself, whereas remission refers first and in itself to sin, although it cannot take place except by the conferral of grace. Regeneration indeed directly entails the removal of original sin, yet not primarily and by its own nature, but secondarily and as the terminus *from which*; and, moreover, such removal can scarcely be called remission, since in that sin there is the least degree of culpability. Likewise regeneration necessarily carries with it the removal of actual sins themselves, to which the notion of remission properly applies; yet this occurs only incidentally and materially, owing, namely, to the incompatibility of grace with any sin whatsoever. Furthermore, even when this removal of actual sins contained in regeneration is considered materially, the remission of sins still differs from regeneration as something of wider extension: both because it extends to all sins, even those committed after regeneration, and because it can be repeated, unlike regeneration.

Moreover, the *formal and specific thing signified* by Penance is not the remission of sins simply as such, but the remission of actual sins committed after regeneration. For it is not the remission of original sin, both because that sin is not properly remitted but taken away, as has been said, and because Penance is a judicial remission which cannot be exercised except over subjects, or over those who, by regeneration itself and the washing away of original sin, are incorporated into the Church. Nor is it the remission of actual sins committed before regeneration, because Penance, once again, involves judicial remission.

This is the principal reason by which the specific distinction of the two sacraments is proved. For since a sacrament is essentially a sign of grace, while the distinction of signs arises from the distinction of the things signified, it follows necessarily from the diversity of the grace signified, or from the diversity in the manner of signifying, that the sacraments are essentially and metaphysically distinct.

As regards the manner of conferring grace.

The grace of Baptism, as generative, is given first and once only, and indeed by way of simple conferral; whereas the grace of Penance, which is in part remissive, can be given several times, and need not be given first or by way of simple conferral. Inasmuch as it is conferred through a judicial power, it is necessarily given secondarily and in an onerous manner.

As regards the material cause.

Water, as the matter of Baptism, is expressly designated in Scripture itself and is most suitably adapted to signify spiritual regeneration; but the matter of Penance is not directly designated in Scripture, nor, on other grounds, is water suited to signify the remission of sins, at least insofar as that remission is exercised judicially.

As regards the formal cause.

The form of Baptism, which is designated equivalently and definitely in Scripture itself, does not belong to Penance, at least as regards the expression of an ablative action ("I baptize you"): both because this expression must be joined to the material act of washing, which, as was said, does not belong to Penance, and because it is not suited to signify judicial remission (as are the words "I absolve you"). Moreover, the form of Penance is not definitely designated in Scripture; and the allusion to the mystery of the Trinity contained in the words of promise and institution—which, moreover, is by no means sacramental—is either too indeterminate ("They shall be loosed also in heaven," or "in the heavens," that is, before God), or too particular ("Receive the Holy Spirit").

As regards the efficient cause.

As was said above (p. 84), Christ, at a different time and on a different occasion, by different words, instituted spiritual regeneration and entrusted to the power of man the remission of sins. As regards the *cause of administration*, which concerns man, the faculty of baptizing was granted to any man, as the Protestants generally acknowledge; by contrast, as we proved in Conclusion I, the power of loosing and binding, of remitting and retaining sins, was given to Peter alone as the foundation of the Church, and to the apostles alone as its rulers, by the solemn rite of breathing upon them.

As regards the final cause and the effect.

Baptism is formally ordered to causing spiritual regeneration; Penance, however, to conferring the remission of sins—and that through the influx of a judicial power—and, more precisely, not the first remission, which is necessarily included in regeneration and especially concerns original sin, but the second, or healing and reparative remission, which regards only actual sin committed after Baptism. Hence there follows also a difference *with respect to the subject and properties*. For Baptism, being regenerative, concerns those who are not subjects, excludes satisfaction, is unrepeatable, and involves a single power; but Penance, being reparative and judicial, concerns subjects alone, is laborious and satisfactory, is repeatable and to be repeated, and involves a twofold and disjunctive power of remitting or retaining.

Proof 5. FROM THE ARGUMENT OF FITTINGNESS and by analogy with the other sacraments which are distinct from one another.

It is fitting that the different ways in which man is perfected in the spiritual life, and the different remedies against the defect of sin, should be provided for by different sacraments; for sacraments were instituted for this twofold end, as was said above (pp. 139 ff.).

But to perfect man in himself, that is, by giving life, and to perfect him incidentally, that is, by restoring life; and likewise to provide a remedy against the defect of sin consisting in the lack of life, and to provide a remedy against the defect of infirmity arising from actual sin—these are two different ways of perfecting and restoring.

Therefore it is fitting that they should be met by two distinct sacraments, just as, through the different sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist, provision is made for the different ways of perfecting and repairing explained above (pp. 139 ff.).

Nevertheless, the distinction explained between Baptism and Penance, far from obstructing their intimate kinship, rather establishes and illuminates it, showing within their characteristic duality the inward bond by which they are united as the so-called *twin sacraments of the dead, twin baptisms*, and *twin planks of salvation*.

St. Thomas speaks to the point (article 6): "Penance occupies the second place with respect to the state of integrity, which is both conferred and preserved by the sacraments already mentioned. Hence it is called metaphorically the second plank after shipwreck. For just as the first remedy for those crossing the sea is that they be kept safe in an intact ship, while the second remedy is that one who has lost the integrity of the ship should cling to a plank, so too the first remedy in the sea of this life is that a man preserve his integrity, while the second is that, if he has lost integrity through sin, he should return through Penance."

Article 2. Whether Christ instituted this sacrament after the Resurrection, when He spoke the words of John 20:23

ARTICLE II. WHETHER CHRIST INSTITUTED THIS SACRAMENT AFTER HIS RESURRECTION, WHEN HE PRONOUNCED THE WORDS OF JOHN 20:23 (question 84, article 7; cf. IV Sentences, distinction 22, question 2, article 3).

STATE OF THE QUESTION

To complete what was said in the preceding article, there arises a secondary question concerning the *time of the institution* of the sacrament of Penance. This can be reduced to three questions:

Whether this sacrament was *first* instituted by Christ, so that, as such, it did not exist under the Old Law.

Whether it was instituted *entirely and immediately* by Christ, and not partly by Christ and partly by the Church.

Whether it was instituted *after the Resurrection*, by Christ's very words in John 20:23: "Whose sins you shall forgive," etc.

NEGATIVE PART AND AFFIRMATIVE PART

Theological note.

That Christ Himself instituted the sacrament of Penance which exists in the Church is *defined as of faith* by the Council of Trent, session 14, canon 1 (in session 7, canon 1, it is defined that all the sacraments, among which Penance is numbered, were instituted by Christ). That the sacrament of Penance which

now exists in the Church did not exist under the Old Law is *at least theologically certain*; this follows from the very fact of its institution, which is of faith, and is also taught explicitly by the Council of Trent, session 14, chapter 1: "Nor was Penance a sacrament before the coming of Christ" (cf. above, p. 13).

That Christ *immediately* instituted all the sacraments of the New Law is *at least theologically certain*, as was stated in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General*, p. 401.

That Christ instituted this sacrament *after the Resurrection*, when He uttered the words of John 20:23, is *theologically certain*, from the Council of Trent, session 14, chapter 1 (cf. above, p. 60). The reason why the Council says that Christ "principally" instituted this sacrament *then* is that the earlier promise of Christ in Matthew 16:19 and 18:18 can be called an inchoate or virtual institution.

Opinions of theologians.

Theologians very commonly agree in the affirmative on the three questions, except for some of the older writers who disagree concerning the first and second questions, although their teaching is not sufficiently firm or clear.

1. Concerning the first question.

Peter of Osma (Peter Martínez, named for his native town of Osma), a professor at Salamanca, while admitting the existence of the sacrament of Penance, *denied its divine institution*. Sixtus IV condemned this denial as heretical in the bull *Licet ea*, August 9, 1479, in these express words: "The sacrament of Penance, in so far as it concerns the conferral of grace, is a sacrament of nature, not of any institution of the Old or New Testament" (Denz. 732).

Certain medieval doctors seem to have taught that this sacrament was instituted under the ancient economy. Some, however, speak of the institution of auricular confession, while others speak of the sacrament itself.

Hugh of St. Victor, On the Sacraments, book 2, part 14, chapter 1, says: "The ancient law commands sins to be confessed, and sends men to the priests that they may confess their sins, so that they may receive pardon" (ML 176, 550). *Thomas Waldensis* likewise teaches this in *On the Sacraments*, chapter 135. They appeal to scriptural words which sound like commands to confess sins: Leviticus, chapters 4 and 5 (especially 4:35 and 5:18); Numbers 5:6 ff.; Psalm 31:5; Proverbs 28:13. Some even go further and determine that Penance was instituted immediately after original sin, when God questioned Adam, "Where art thou?" (Genesis 3:9), and Cain, "Where is Abel thy brother?" (Genesis 4:9). They say that these words contain an invitation to repentance; or they refer to Joshua, who, by the Lord's command, invited Achan to confess his sin, saying: "My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and confess, and tell me what thou hast done" (Joshua 7:19).

More weightily, *Peter Lombard, Sentences*, book 4, distinction 22, no. 3, teaches: "They say that this [that is, effecting the sacrament which it signifies] is to be understood of those sacraments which were instituted in the New Testament, such as the sacrament of Baptism, of Confirmation, and of the Body of Christ. *But the sacrament of Penance, like that of Matrimony, existed before the time of grace, even from the beginning of the human race. For both were instituted in our first parents*" (ML 192, 899).

Nevertheless, this opinion, even in view of the very words of Peter Lombard, *can be interpreted benignly*, so that this Doctor is said to teach the institution of some sacrament of Penance under the Old Law

(which is true, and is maintained by many theologians with St. Thomas), but not the institution of this specific sacrament which exists under the New Law. The words of Hugh of St. Victor and of the others, however, refer directly to confession alone and seem to teach only the divine necessity of confession even under the Old Law.

2. Concerning the second question.

Certain medieval theologians, likewise of great repute, seem to teach that this sacrament was instituted by Christ *only mediately*, that is, through the Apostles, appealing to James, who says, immediately after the words concerning Extreme Unction: "Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be saved" (James 5:16); or that it was instituted through the general custom of the Church. Nevertheless, they seem to assert this only concerning those things which belong to the matter or the act of the penitent (such as confession and satisfaction), so that Christ immediately instituted the power of the keys while leaving to the judgment and determination of the Church the other elements.

For this opinion are cited *William of Auxerre* (*Summa aurea*, book 4, treatise 2, chapter 3), *Alexander of Hales* (*Summa*, part 4, question 59, member 3), *Bonaventure* (on IV Sentences, distinction 17, part 2, article 1, question 3), and *Marsilius* (on II Sentences, question 2, article 2).

This opinion also is expressed somewhat indeterminately and can be taken in different senses, as was also said concerning the institution of Confirmation and Extreme Unction in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General*, article 29 (p. 398 ff.).

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion I. The sacrament of Penance was first instituted by Christ, so that under the Old Law there was not that same sacrament which is administered by the Church.

Proof.

It is of faith that Christ instituted each and every sacrament of the New Law, and Penance by name. Therefore this sacrament, as such, did not exist before Christ; for what already existed cannot be said to have been instituted.

Hence the threefold opinion of the adversaries mentioned above under no. 1 is shown to be false, and their arguments are answered.

The foundation of *Peter of Osma's opinion* seems to be that penance for sins is of natural law and therefore does not require institution; likewise, it is a certain virtue and hence, like other virtues, has no need of institution.

To these reasons St. Thomas had already replied: "It is of natural law that a man should repent of the evils he has done, in so far as he is grieved at having done them, and seeks some remedy for his grief, and also shows certain signs of grief, as did the Ninevites, as is read in Jonah 3. ... But just as other things which are of natural law received determination from the institution of the divine law ... so also did penance" (reply to objection 1). This determination of divine law is especially necessary here, since the matter concerns a sacrament, or a cause of grace, which is God's proper effect.

"Penance is a virtue in so far as it belongs to the dictate of the natural law; therefore it has no institution inasmuch as it is a virtue, but it does have one with regard to the determinate manner in

which it is a sacrament. Both are found in one penance; therefore the same penance is both a sacrament and a virtue, in respect of something of natural law and in respect of something proceeding from institution" (on IV Sentences, distinction 22, question 2, article 3, question 1, reply to objection 2).

The arguments of Hugh of St. Victor and others show only that under the Old Law there was required of the sinner an acknowledgment of his sin, or even a general and implicit confession contained in the very offering made to a priest for sin; they do not show, however, that there was a specific and determinate confession, or a sacramental confession, much less the determinate and specific confession which exists in the sacrament of the New Law.

With *Peter Lombard* we admit, following St. Thomas and contrary to several theologians, that there existed some sacrament of Penance under the ancient law, both natural and Mosaic (cf. above, Introduction to the treatise, p. 13, and the treatise *On the Sacraments in General*, article 40, p. 502 ff.); but we teach that it was of a kind wholly different from our sacrament, as is clear from its different form, matter, and character.

The form was lacking in all the ancient sacraments, as was said in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General*, article 4 (p. 99 ff.).

The matter, or the acts of the penitent, was indeterminate under the law of nature; under the Mosaic law it was imperfectly determined, inasmuch as contrition was to be fostered in the heart rather than expressed by definite external signs, and the general and implicit confession contained in a person's offering of a sacrifice for sin to a priest sufficed. Under the evangelical law, however, sorrow must be definitely signified to the priest and joined to confession and satisfaction, while a definite and explicit confession must be made along with the purpose of making satisfaction.

The character of Penance before Christ was not, and could not have been, *judicial*: both because of the absence of a form having the character of a judicial sentence, and especially because before the Passion of Christ such a judgment could not be exercised. For its efficacy depends upon the judicial power of Christ which He acquired by His blood, or by the merit of His Passion.

St. Thomas speaks to the point:

On IV Sentences, distinction 22, question 2, article 3, question 2: "In the time of the law of nature there was no determinate manner [of doing penance]; but each person, according to what came into his heart, determined for himself a manner of doing penance ... For man was admonished to determine for himself some manner of doing penance."

In the present article, reply to objection 2: "Penance under the Old [Mosaic] Law had a certain determination as to sorrow, so that it should be in the heart rather than in external signs, according to Joel 2:13: 'Rend your hearts and not your garments'; but as to the remedy to be sought for sorrow, it was that they should in some way confess their sins to the ministers of God, at least in general. Hence the Lord says [Leviticus 5:17]: 'If a soul sin through ignorance ... he shall offer a ram without blemish from the flock to the priest, according to the measure and estimation of the sin; and he shall pray for him, because he did it unwittingly, and it shall be forgiven him.' For in the very fact that someone made an offering for his sin, he in some manner confessed his sin to the priest. And in this sense Proverbs 28:13 says: 'He that hideth his sins shall not prosper; but he that confesseth and

forsaketh them shall obtain mercy.' But *the power of the keys had not yet been instituted, which is derived from the Passion of Christ*; and consequently it had not yet been instituted that a man should grieve over sin with the purpose of submitting himself through confession and satisfaction to the keys of the Church, under the hope of obtaining pardon by virtue of the Passion of Christ."

On IV Sentences, in the same place: "[Hence] Penance is a sacrament both of the Old Law and of the New Law, and insofar as it is a sacrament of the New Law it was not instituted before the coming of Christ." "[For] when something belonging to the essence of a thing is varied, it is not the same thing in number; therefore, since the definite manner of doing penance which penitents observe in the Church belongs to the essence of this sacrament, this sacrament did not exist before that manner of doing penance existed. And because this manner did not exist before the coming of Christ, neither did the sacrament of Penance exist before the coming of Christ; although something similar existed before the coming of Christ, and some manner of performing penance."

Conclusion II. The sacrament of Penance was instituted immediately and entirely by Christ.

This is proved by the same arguments brought forward concerning the sacraments in general in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General*, article 29. Those arguments likewise exclude a partial institution by the Apostles or the Church, where the matters under discussion belong to the essence of the sacrament, since the essence of any thing is one and indivisible.

But if anyone wishes to interpret the opinion of those medieval doctors in the sense of an immediate and total institution, yet only a generic institution, this opinion has been refuted in the same treatise, article 30, and will again be refuted below in article 83.

You will say: Christ consecrated by His own use the sacraments which He instituted, as is plain in the case of Baptism and the Eucharist. But He did not use the sacrament of Penance. Therefore He did not institute it, but rather left it to be instituted by the Church.

Reply: The major premise of the argument is false when understood universally, and as regards both active and passive use. Christ Himself used His sacraments in whatever way was fitting to His dignity and office. In fact, He used the Eucharist alone even passively; He used Orders and Baptism only actively (and, indeed, probably only so).[95] The other sacraments He used neither actively nor passively. In particular, concerning the three sacraments mentioned by the objector, observe the following.

[95] Compare the treatise On the Sacraments in General, article 29, p. 403.

Christ did not use Baptism passively, for He was incapable of such use; He was, however, baptized with the baptism of John, in order to perfect and consummate in it Baptism of the New Law, which He was about to institute, and He was marked by Circumcision so as to perfect and consummate the sacraments of the Old Law. Nor did He use it actively, unless perhaps He baptized the disciples themselves (as Augustine thinks probable, *Letter* 265, 4; *On the Soul*, 3, 9, 12), John the Baptist and the Blessed Virgin (as certain theologians judge not unfitting); but He sent the disciples themselves to baptize both after and before His Passion (John 3:22–26; 4:1 ff.).

"He both received the sacrament of the Eucharist Himself and gave it to others, both to commend the excellence of this sacrament and because this sacrament is the memorial of His Passion, in which

Christ is priest and victim" (reply to objection 4; cf. the treatise *On the Eucharist*, volume 1, article 3, p. 80 ff.).

"But the use of this sacrament [Penance], which He instituted, in no way belonged to Him: neither inasmuch as He Himself should repent, since there was no sin in Him, nor inasmuch as He should administer this sacrament to others, since, to manifest His mercy and power, He bestowed the effect of this sacrament without the sacrament, as was stated above (article 4 of this question, reply to objection 3)" (reply to objection 4).

Conclusion III. The sacrament of Penance was instituted after the Resurrection, when Christ pronounced the words of John 20:23.

Proof 1. FROM SCRIPTURE ITSELF.

All the other texts of Scripture which we have said refer to this sacrament (preceding article, p. 70 ff.) manifestly contain either a simple allusion or only a promise (Matthew 16:19; 18:18); but the words of John 21:23 express the actual conferral of the power of remitting sins, in which the whole essence of the sacrament is contained as in its nucleus. Moreover, no sacrament can be instituted twice.

You will say: In the words of Matthew 16:19, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind ... and shalt loose ...," and 18:18, "Whatsoever you shall bind ... and shall loose ...," uttered before the Passion, the actual conferral of power is expressed no less than in John 20:23. But, as was said in the preceding article, this is the power of remitting and retaining sins, which is proper to this sacrament. Therefore this sacrament was instituted at that very time, and consequently before the Passion.

Reply: Rejecting the opinion of some, such as the Salmanticenses (disputation 4, doubt 4, § 2, no. 152), who deny the minor premise of this objection and teach that Matthew's words concern not the sacramental power of binding and loosing sins, but only the external and contentious power of binding or loosing by censure and excommunication, we say that, although in the three places there is question of the actual conferral of some power, and each passage in its own way refers to the power of remitting sins, nevertheless, from the nature and circumstances of the passages themselves, it is rightly gathered (as Catholics must teach without controversy, with the Council of Trent) that only in the text of John is there properly question of the institution of the sacrament, whereas in both places in Matthew there is question only of a promise.

For power is indeed actually conferred in the three passages, namely Matthew 16:19 (the power of the keys, to Peter), Matthew 18:18 (the power of the keys, to all the Apostles), and John 20:23 (the power of remitting sins, to all the Apostles); yet it cannot be conferred in absolutely the same way three times, and especially the same sacrament cannot be instituted three times, but only once. Furthermore, it is manifest that in John 20:23 the power of remission is actually conferred from the very solemnity of the action, namely Christ's breathing upon the Apostles and His invocation of the Holy Spirit, and also from the very character of the words, "Receive the Holy Spirit," and "They are forgiven them" (cf. preceding article, pp. 78 ff.). Hence in the two passages of Matthew there can be question only of a promise of the same power; this is strengthened also by the fact that Matthew's words refer directly, not to the power of remitting sins, but to the more general power of binding and loosing, of which the power of remission is certainly a principal part.

Wherefore it can be said that in Matthew this power is actually conferred, but generally and by way of requirement, and therefore in itself by way of promise; in John, however, specifically and executively, and therefore formally, as is required for the determinate institution of the sacrament.

Proof 2. FROM TRADITION.

Although the Fathers do not expressly and distinctly affirm that the words of John 20:23 refer to the very institution of the sacrament, nevertheless, from the importance which they attribute to these words and from the manner in which they comment upon them (cf. the texts of Origen, Cyprian, Firmilian, Pacian, Ambrose, Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, Gelasius, and Gregory the Great, cited in the preceding article, pp. 81, 84 ff., 110 ff.), it can rightly be concluded that they took it as established that those words were words of institution.

Nor does the Council of Trent intend anything other than to gather and report the mind of the Fathers when it teaches explicitly and unhesitatingly that these words contain the institution of the sacrament (Denz. 894).

Proof 3. FROM THE ARGUMENT OF FITTINGNESS.

The first argument of fittingness can be drawn from the very Christological symbolism of this sacrament. For every sacrament, according to its particular character, is ordered to signifying the Passion of Christ, from which it derives its efficacy. But this sacrament, since it is the resurrection of the dead to the life of grace, especially signifies the Passion of Christ under the aspect of resurrection, or Christ rising from death for sin to the life of glory. Therefore it was fitting for it to be instituted after the Resurrection, that what was to be represented in the thing signifying might first be manifested in the exemplar.

The second argument of fittingness can be drawn from the very power of remitting sins, insofar as it regards the mystical body of Christ.

For the mystical body is later than the physical body of Christ and proceeded from Him as He slept upon the Cross, where the marriage of the Lamb with the Church was consummated. Therefore it was fitting that the power over the mystical body, in which this sacrament consists, should be conferred after the conferral of the Eucharistic power over His physical body, or after the institution of the sacrament of Orders, which took place at the Last Supper immediately before the Passion; and indeed that it should be conferred after the Passion itself had been consummated, when Christ, rising to life, breathed the breath of His life into the children begotten by His death.

You will say 1: Penance is a preparation and disposition for Orders and the Eucharist; but a disposition precedes the form to which it disposes. Hence it was fitting for Penance to be instituted before those sacraments, and therefore before the Passion.

Reply: Penance stands in relation to those sacraments as a disposition incidentally, that is, on the supposition of sin, but not as a necessary disposition in itself; for Penance is not required as a prerequisite for receiving the Eucharist in one who is without sin (question 65, article 2, reply to objection 4). Hence the objection fails.

Moreover, to meet an objection which might be framed from a comparison of these sacraments, recall what was said in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General*, article 43, p. 533. For Penance, in the order of nature, is posterior to the *Eucharist*, because the latter concerns the perfection of the individual in

itself, whereas the former does so incidentally. In relation to *Orders*, however, Penance is indeed prior in the order of nature, insofar as it concerns the individual while Orders concerns the multitude; yet not in every respect, since those things which exist in themselves (as Orders) are in another respect naturally prior to those which exist incidentally (as Penance). Besides, Orders simply precedes Penance in the order of excellence, since it is ordered to the common good and is more closely related to the Eucharist, which is the end of the sacraments.

You will say 2: At the death of Christ, when the Saviour exclaimed, "It is consummated," the Old Law ceased, and consequently also its sacraments which belong to its essence; therefore, at that very moment the New Law and its sacraments began to bind, and not at some later time—otherwise for some time men would have been without any law. Consequently Penance, like all the other sacraments of the New Law, ought to have been instituted before the death of Christ.

Reply: At the death of Christ the Old Law ceased, but not simply; the New Law began, but not simply. Both came about simply at the time when the Gospel was promulgated. In the interval between the death of Christ and the promulgation of the Gospel,[96] both laws could be observed, although under a different aspect and for a different end. For an understanding of these matters one must recall the celebrated controversy between *Jerome* (see especially *Commentary on Galatians* 2:2 ff.; *Letter* 112, 4 ff.) and *Augustine* (see especially *Letter* 82, 1 ff.; *Letter* 40, 4, 4 ff.) concerning the manner and time of the abrogation of the Old Law.[97]

[96] On determining the time of this promulgation, compare the treatise On Baptism, article 2, pp. 34–36.

[97] On this controversy compare also the treatise On Baptism, in the same place.

St. Thomas appropriately explains it thus, *I–II*, question 103, article 4, reply to objection 1: "On this point Jerome and Augustine seem to have held different opinions. For *Jerome* distinguished two periods: one period before the Passion of Christ, in which the legal observances were neither dead, since they had binding force, nor deadly, because those observing them did not sin; but immediately after the Passion of Christ they began to be not only dead—that is, no longer having force and obligation—but also deadly, so that whoever observed them sinned mortally. Therefore he said that the Apostles never observed the legal observances after the Passion in truth, but only by a certain pious dissimulation, lest they scandalize the Jews and hinder their conversion. This dissimulation, however, must be understood not as if they did not truly perform those acts, but because they did not perform them as observers of the ceremonies of the Law; just as if someone should cut off the foreskin of his member for the sake of health, and not for the sake of observing the legal circumcision."

"But because it seems unbecoming that the Apostles should conceal for fear of scandal things which belong to the truth of life and doctrine, and that they should use dissimulation in matters which pertain to the salvation of the faithful, therefore *Augustine* more fittingly distinguished three periods: one before the Passion of Christ, in which the legal observances were neither deadly nor dead; another after the time when the Gospel had been promulgated, in which the legal observances are both dead and deadly; and a third intermediate period, namely from the Passion of Christ until the promulgation of the Gospel, in which the legal observances were indeed dead, because they no longer possessed any force and no one was bound to observe them, yet were not deadly, because those who had converted from Judaism to Christ could lawfully observe those legal observances, provided that

they did not place their hope in them in such a way as to regard them as necessary for salvation, as though without the legal observances faith in Christ could not justify."

"But those who were converted from heathenism to Christ had no reason to observe them. Therefore Paul circumcised Timothy, who had been born of a Jewish mother; but he refused to circumcise Titus, who had been born of Gentiles."

"For this reason the Holy Spirit did not will that those who were converted from Judaism should immediately be forbidden to observe the legal observances, as those who were converted from heathenism were forbidden the rites of the Gentiles, so that a certain difference might be shown between these rites. For the rites of the Gentiles were rejected as altogether unlawful and always forbidden by God; the rites of the Law, however, had ceased as fulfilled through the Passion of Christ, having been instituted by God to prefigure Christ."

These last words are beautifully commented upon by *Cajetan* (on this passage): "But the reason why, for a certain time only, that is, until the promulgation of the Gospel, it was lawful to observe those same observances as dead, is that only up to the tomb is a dead person, considered as dead, kept. Hence, by the authority of the Holy Spirit, as the text [of St. Thomas] says, a time was granted as though by way of dispensation—not for an act of lying, since permission was not given to use them as living, for in that way they would profess that Christ was yet to be born and to suffer, and so forth —but for bringing the dead Synagogue, the mother, with honour to the tomb. For she was buried when the Gospel was promulgated. For this reason those ceremonies can now no longer be observed without mortal sin, either as living, because that would be a lie, or as dead, because of the burial."

The opinion of Augustine, embraced by St. Thomas and other theologians, was sanctioned and, as Cajetan says, as it were "canonized" by the Council of Florence itself, in its *Decree for the Jacobites*, in these words: "[The Church] firmly believes ... that the legal observances of the Old Testament ... ceased with the coming of Christ ... Yet it does not deny that from the Passion of Christ until the promulgation of the Gospel those observances could be kept, provided that they were in no way believed necessary for salvation; but after the promulgation of the Gospel it declares that they cannot be observed without the loss of eternal salvation" (Denz. 712).

According to this opinion, therefore, it is understood that Christ fittingly reserved the institution of certain sacraments (namely Penance and probably Confirmation, Extreme Unction, and Matrimony) for the time after the Passion, when the New Law had not yet definitively begun to bind and was constituted only in first act. As regards the use of the sacrament of Penance, in the time between Christ's death and its institution (the three days of His death) Jewish Christians could use the old sacrament of Penance, while in the following period up until the promulgation of the Gospel it was lawful to use either sacrament.

To complete this question, it should be observed that, proportionately to what we said about the institution of Baptism itself in the treatise *On Baptism* (article 2, p. 36), although properly speaking this sacrament was instituted on the very day of the Resurrection in John 20:23, *nevertheless it can be said in a broad sense that its institution began long before the Passion*, at the beginning of Christ's ministry, and was completed on the very last day of the Ascension, inasmuch as Christ gradually, on various occasions, explained what He was about to institute or what He was instituting.

For, as St. Thomas observes (*in the body of this article*; cf. on IV Sentences, distinction 22, question 2, article 3, question 3, reply to objection 2), at the beginning of His ministry the Lord proposed *the matter* of this sacrament when "He prescribed to men not only that they should repent, but also that they should do penance, signifying the definite modes of acts which are required for this sacrament"; subsequently (to say nothing of the various allusions to the power of the keys, contained in His manner of acting toward sinners, mentioned in the preceding article, p. 70 ff.) He proposed *the form and the general character of the sacramental power*, and that under the affirming form of a promise, in Matthew 16:19 and 18:18; finally, after the institution itself, immediately before the Ascension He explained *the efficacy and effect of the sacrament*, commanding "that penance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations" (Luke 24:47).

For this reason the *Council of Trent* (session 14, chapter 1) says that Christ "*principally instituted*" this sacrament *then*, when He pronounced the words of John 20:23 on the very day of the Resurrection.

Chapter II. On the Physical Essence of This Sacrament, or Its Matter and Form in General

CHAPTER II

ON THE PHYSICAL ESSENCE OF THIS SACRAMENT, OR ON ITS MATTER AND FORM IN GENERAL

As we saw in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General*, a twofold essence of a sacrament is distinguished: the one *metaphysical*, composed of sign and thing signified; the other *physical*, namely, considered under the aspect of the sacramental sign, composed of the two elements commonly called *matter* and *form*. The metaphysical essence of this sacrament, which is entirely specified and derived from its sacramental grace, will be considered equivalently in Chapter VIII, concerning the effect of Penance. Its physical essence, however, can be considered in two ways: *in general* and *in particular*, that is, according to its individual parts; for it is proper and peculiar to this sacrament, besides matter and form, to have parts within its matter.

In this chapter, therefore, the *physical essence* of Penance will be considered as a whole, leaving to the subsequent chapters (III–VII) the distinct exposition of its individual parts, namely, contrition, confession, satisfaction, and absolution. The first consideration will concern the *acts of the penitent and the absolution of the priest*, inasmuch as they concur in constituting this sacrament, whether as a necessary requisite (against the Protestants), or as essential parts, namely matter and form (against the Scotists), or as integral parts of its matter (which applies to the acts of the penitent alone). The second consideration will concern *sins*, inasmuch as they are the remote matter of this sacrament.

DIVISION OF THIS CHAPTER INTO SEVEN ARTICLES

Article 3. Whether the sacrament of Penance consists in the absolution of the priest and the three acts of the penitent.

Article 4. Whether the sacrament of Penance consists essentially in the three acts of the penitent and the absolution of the priest, as in matter and form.

Article 5. Whether the acts of the penitent are integral parts of the matter of Penance.

Article 6. Whether sins are the remote matter of this sacrament.

Article 7. Whether all sins committed after Baptism are the proper matter of the sacrament of Penance.

Article 8. Whether sins committed before Baptism are matter of the sacrament of Penance.

Article 9. Whether sins accompanying Baptism are matter of the sacrament of Penance.

St. Thomas first resolves the question of the form and proximate matter as regards their essence in question 84, article 1, and completes it in question 90 (where he considers the acts of the penitent as integral parts); the other question concerning remote matter, or sins, he touches on in question 84, article 2, and completes in question 69, article 10, objections 2 and 3, where, on the occasion of discussing the revival of Baptism, he considers the different relation of both sacraments of the dead to the remission of sins.

Article 3. Whether the sacrament of Penance consists in the absolution of the priest and the three acts of the penitent, namely, contrition, confession, and satisfaction

ARTICLE III. WHETHER THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE CONSISTS IN THE ABSOLUTION OF THE PRIEST AND THE THREE ACTS OF THE PENITENT, NAMELY CONTRITION, CONFESSION, AND SATISFACTION (q. 84, a. 1; q. 90, a. 2).

STATE OF THE QUESTION

The question is here posed only in a general way, *against the Protestants concerning those things which pertain to the Catholic faith*, namely, which concur effectively in this sacrament, in whatever manner, either intrinsically and constitutively, or extrinsically and integratively, or conditionally. Thus the question is approximately this: Whether absolution, contrition, confession, and satisfaction are parts of the salutary sacrament of Penance, or at least requisites for this sacrament to be completed and to exercise its power in the remission of sins.

NEGATIVE POSITION

All Protestants, both Lutherans and Calvinists, deny that absolution, contrition, confession, and satisfaction, understood in the Catholic sense, are parts of Penance; moreover, they reject the very sacramental character of Penance as distinct from Baptism, as was stated in Article I.

According to them, Penance consists essentially in a change of life, or rather in the *purpose of changing one's life* (in contrition understood in the Protestant sense); and there are two parts, or quasi-causes, by which this result is obtained, namely *terrors* impressed upon the conscience by acknowledgment of sin and divine judgment (in which they place Protestant confession), and *faith or confidence*, whereby one believes that sins have been remitted to oneself through Christ's satisfaction (received from hearing the Gospel together with the priest's absolution declaring the Gospel promise). *Calvin* (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, book 3, chapter 3, no. 1 ff.) uses different words, teaching that Penance consists in mortification and vivification; yet he teaches the same doctrine, understanding by mortification the terrors of conscience and by vivification the effect of faith.

They are led to this doctrine by a *twofold fundamental principle*: the total corruption of nature by original sin, and justification by faith alone, or confidence in the merits of Christ.

Man is so corrupted in his nature through original sin, and so diminished in his will, that he absolutely cannot avoid sinning or freely elicit an act of will whereby he may be contrite for sin. Hence penance cannot consist in any act of contrition in the Catholic sense, whereby the will detests sin and hates it for itself.

Moreover, on account of his sins and the divine judgment, man conceives a certain terror of conscience, which is like passive contrition. To this there is then added, from the hearing of the evangelical promise of remission, or rather of the non-imputation of sins on account of the merits and satisfaction of Christ (which is the only satisfaction, namely Christ's satisfaction imputed to us), with the concurrence also of the minister who declares and recalls the evangelical promise in his words or absolution, a sense of confidence is conceived and a voluntary act of faith is elicited, whereby a man believes that his sins have been remitted to him and that he has been justified, that is, that not his sins but the righteousness of Christ has been imputed to him.

In this act of faith, generated by subjective terror and the objective promise, consists the proper nature of penance and the proper cause of justification. In it alone anything active and free enters into penance; in it consists, or within it is contained, the purpose of changing one's life (contrition), which can be nothing other than the will to sin no more, as a person justified by Christ ought; it is the cause of justification, or of the non-imputation of sins and the imputation of Christ's righteousness.

Hence, if we wish to reduce the Protestant teaching to theological terms, Penance comprises two parts, *terrors of conscience* and *faith in Christ*, in which its whole essence and cause are found. Moreover, it consists *presuppositively* in the terrors; *formally and specifically* in the act of faith; *formally and reduplicatively* in the purpose of changing one's life, that is, in the act of faith insofar as it includes such a purpose; *consecutively* in the change of life, or in justification itself, in which life is not properly changed or sins taken away, but the life and righteousness of Christ are imputed to us and our sins are not imputed.

The extent and applications of this teaching are set out in the following questions concerning contrition, confession, satisfaction, and absolution. For the present compare *Luther, Sermon on Penance*; *On the Babylonian Captivity* (where he deals with the sacrament of Penance); the *Schmalkald Articles*, part 3, article 3, nos. 3, 10, 11, 18; *Melanchthon, Augsburg Confession*, article 12; *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, article 12; *Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion*, book 3, chapter 3, no. 1 ff.

Compare Luther's words below, where the condemnation by Leo X is discussed.

The *Schmalkald Articles* (*Luther's collected works*) say: "It was impossible for the papists to teach penance rightly, since they did not know sin. For ... those who suppose that man's natural powers have remained entirely sound and uncorrupted do not think rightly about original sin, and ... they maintain that we possess a will which does what lies in it to merit God's grace, while man does only what is in himself and according to free choice" (part 3, article 3, no. 10).[98]

[98] Quoted in J. T. Müller, Die symbolischen Bücher der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche, Gütersloh, 1898, p. 313.

The *Augsburg Confession*, article 12, thus expresses the very words condemned in canon 4 of the Council of Trent: "Penance consists properly of these two parts. The first is contrition, or the terrors struck into the conscience by recognition of sin; the other is faith, which is conceived from the

Gospel or absolution and believes that sins are remitted through Christ, and consoles the conscience and frees it from terrors."[99]

[99] Quoted in J. T. Müller, op. cit., p. 41.

The *Helvetic Confession* (1562), chapter 14, thus describes Penance: "By penance we understand the return to right mind of a sinner, stirred up by the word of the Gospel and by the Holy Spirit and accepted by true faith, whereby the sinner immediately acknowledges the corruption innate in himself and all his sins, of which he is accused by the word of God, and from his heart grieves over them; and not only deplores them and frankly confesses them before God, with shame, but also rejects them with indignation; earnestly pursuing amendment and the constant striving for innocence and virtue, in which he diligently exercises himself through all the remaining days of his life."[100]

[100] E. F. K. Müller, Die Bekenntnisschriften der reformierten Kirche, Leipzig, 1903, p. 189.

The *Confession of Erlau* (1562) proposes the following scholastic formula: "The efficient cause of penance is the grace of God; the meritorious cause of penance, Christ; the formal cause, the Holy Spirit; the instrumental cause, faith with the word; the final cause, new obedience."[101]

[101] E. F. K. Müller, op. cit., p. 289.

The same teaching is briefly summarized and condemned in *documents of the Church*.

Council of Trent, session 14, chapter 8 and canon 13: "The best penance is a new life"; chapter 3 and canon 4: "There are only two parts of penance, namely the terrors struck into the conscience and faith"; chapter 8 and canon 12: "The satisfaction of penitents is nothing other than the faith by which they apprehend that Christ has made satisfaction for them."

The second and tenth of the twelve propositions submitted to the examination of the theologians of Trent state: "There are not three parts of penance, contrition, confession, and satisfaction, but only two, namely terrors struck into the conscience by recognition of sin and faith conceived from the Gospel, or from absolution, by which a person believes that his sins have been remitted through Christ. All punishment and guilt are always remitted together by God; and the satisfaction of penitents is nothing other than faith, by which they apprehend that Christ has made satisfaction for them; therefore canonical satisfactions, formerly instituted by the Fathers for the sake of example, or discipline, or the testing of faith, whether introduced by the Fathers or exacted by the Council of Nicaea, are never necessary for the remission of punishment."[102]

[102] Quoted in A. Theiner, Acta genuina Conc. Tridentini, Zagreb [Zagrabiae], 1874, vol. 1, p. 531 ff.

The fifth and seventh of Luther's propositions, condemned by Leo X in the bull *Exsurge Domine*, 15 June 1520, state: "There are three parts of penance: contrition, confession, and satisfaction; this is not founded upon Sacred Scripture or upon ancient holy Christian teachers. Most true is the proverb, and superior to all teaching hitherto given about contritions: Do it no longer; the best penance is a new life" (Denz. 745, 747).

AFFIRMATIVE POSITION

Theological note

It is *of faith*, as defined by the Council of Trent (canons 4 and 9), that absolution, contrition, confession, and satisfaction belong to the sacrament of Penance and that without them the perfect

and entire remission of sins cannot be accomplished; likewise, that the three aforesaid acts of the penitent are, as it were, the matter and parts of the sacrament of Penance.

It is *at least theologically certain* from the same Council (chapter 3) that those three acts pertain to the integrity of the sacrament and are, in this sense, truly parts of the sacrament.

Whether some theological note is to be assigned to the twofold proposition which teaches both that these acts are required for the very existence of the sacrament and that they are intrinsic constituent parts of its essence will be discussed in the following article.

Documents of the Church

We omit documents cited in their proper places which concern individually the necessity of absolution, contrition, confession, and satisfaction.

Leo I, cited in Article I (p. 61 ff.), says that the four aforesaid acts are necessary for Penance.

The *Council of Constance*, cited in Article I (p. 63), mentions the four acts as requisites of Penance.

The *Council of Florence*, cited in the same place (p. 63), referring to the same four acts of the penitent, calls contrition, confession, and satisfaction *as it were the matter* of the sacrament, distinguishing them as three parts. The Council of Trent makes this teaching its own.

Leo X, cited above (p. 159), speaks against Luther. Compare also the other propositions of Luther condemned in the bull of the same Leo X (Denz. 748–754), the fourth of which was referred to in Article I (p. 51).

THE COUNCIL OF TRENT[103]

Session 6, chapter 14, cited in Article I (p. 64), teaches that postbaptismal penance *contains* not only contrition, but also confession, absolution, and satisfaction.

[103] Cf. Cavallera, "Le décret du concile de Trente sur la pénitence et l'extrême-onction," in Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique, 1924; Dictionnaire de théologie catholique, art. "Pénitence," col. 1069 ff.

Session 14 on Penance, chapter 2, cited in the same place (p. 65 ff.), equivalently sets forth the four aforesaid acts; moreover, alluding to them, it speaks of "matter and form," asking: "This sacrament is distinct from Baptism ... *in matter and form, by which the essence of the sacrament is constituted*, it is very greatly different."

Ibid., chapter 3: "Concerning the parts ... of Penance ... The acts of the penitent himself, namely contrition, confession, and satisfaction, are *as it were the matter* of this sacrament. And insofar as in the penitent, for the integrity of the sacrament and for the full and perfect remission of sins, these acts are required by divine institution, for this reason they are called the parts of Penance. ... This holy Council therefore condemns together with their teachings those who contend that the parts of penance are terrors struck into the conscience and faith" (Denz. 896).

Ibid., canon 4: "If anyone denies that for the full and perfect remission of sins there are required in the penitent three acts *as it were the matter* of the sacrament of Penance, namely contrition, confession, and satisfaction, which are called the three parts of Penance; or says that there are only two parts of Penance, namely terrors struck into the conscience by recognition of sin and faith conceived from the

Gospel or from absolution by which one believes that sins have been remitted to oneself through Christ: let him be anathema" (Denz. 914).

In this canon four things are defined: that the three acts of the penitent are required for complete sacramental remission; that they stand *as it were in the place of matter*; likewise, that they are called three parts; and that the doctrine of the Protestants is heretical.

Nor is anything weakened by the word *complete*, as though the Council were speaking of an entire and perfect remission even as regards punishment, so that it would include satisfaction simply and without distinction between intention and deed. The Council omits mention of the integrity of the sacrament and of the identity with the character of parts, which it addresses in chapter 3; moreover, it explains the equivalent phrase *as it were matter* in the Catechism of the Council of Trent, to be cited presently. Further, the Council itself in chapter 2 cited above uses simply the word "matter."

Ibid., canon 12: "If anyone says that the whole punishment together with guilt is always remitted by God, and that the satisfaction of penitents is nothing other than faith by which they apprehend that Christ has made satisfaction for them: let him be anathema" (Denz. 922).

The *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, part 2, chapter 5, question 13, thus explains the force of the Council's doctrine: "Since there is nothing which the faithful ought to know more thoroughly than the *matter of this sacrament*, it must be taught that this sacrament differs especially from the others in this, that *the matter of the other sacraments* is some natural or artificial thing; but *the matter of the sacrament of Penance is, as it were, the acts of the penitent*, namely contrition, confession, and satisfaction, as was declared by the Council of Trent; and these are called *parts of Penance*, inasmuch as they are required in the penitent by divine institution for the integrity of the sacrament and the full and perfect remission of sins. Nor are these acts called *as it were matter* by the holy Council because they do not possess the nature of *true matter*, but because they are not matter of that sort of which the other sacraments consist, such as water in Baptism and chrism in Confirmation. As for what is also said by others, that sins themselves are the matter of this sacrament, there is evidently no disagreement, if we consider carefully. For as we say that wood is the matter of fire which is consumed by the force of fire, so sins, which are destroyed by Penance, may rightly be called the matter of this sacrament."

The *Roman Ritual*, title 3, chapter 1, *On the Sacrament of Penance*: "Since three things concur in constituting that sacrament—matter, form, and minister—the remote matter thereof is sins; the proximate matter is the acts of the penitent, namely contrition, confession, and satisfaction. The form, however, is that of absolution, its words being: I absolve thee, etc."

CONCLUSION

The sacrament of Penance consists in the absolution of the priest and the three acts of the penitent, namely contrition, confession, and satisfaction (q. 84, a. 1; q. 90, a. 2).

Proof 1. From the Fathers

This is gathered individually concerning each of the aforesaid acts from the various texts cited in Article I and to be cited in the following chapters, where each of them will be treated. The teaching of the Fathers is well summarized in the words of Leo I, cited in Article I (p. 61 ff.).

Proof 2. From the nature of this sacrament as Penance and as a penitential judgment

This follows from the teaching of Scripture and the Fathers established in Article I.

First, this sacrament is *Penance*; therefore, as such, it involves the acts of the penitent (and indeed external acts, since it is a sacrament), namely contrition, confession of sin, and also satisfaction, which is generally included in contrition itself when outwardly manifested, together with a certain will to make satisfaction, which is included in contrition.

Second, it is a *true judgment*; therefore it involves both a sentence of the judge, namely of the priest, and knowledge of the case.

Third, it is a *judgment for the remission of sins*; therefore it involves both a remissive sentence, or absolution, and knowledge of the case through the confession of the matter, since the internal acts of sin cannot otherwise become known.

Fourth and especially, it is a judgment not *vindictive* but *remissive*, and not merely remissive but *reconciliatory*, since it takes place by means of a certain compensation; therefore it involves a twofold action, namely the action or sentence of the offended party who remits the offense (absolution), and the action of the offender who repairs or compensates for it; and this is threefold: a will to repair and compensate for the offense (contrition); recourse or submission to the decision of the offended party, who ought to examine and judge the cause (confession); and acceptance of the compensation to be made, together with its execution (satisfaction).

On this subject St. Thomas, q. 90, a. 2, says: "It has been said ... above (q. 85, a. 3, ad 3) that the recompense of an offense takes place in one manner in penance and in another in vindictive justice. For in vindictive justice the recompense is made according to the judgment of the judge, and not according to the will of the offender or of the one offended; but in penance the recompense for the offense is made according to the will of the sinner, and according to the judgment of God, against whom sin is committed. For here one seeks not merely the restoration of the equality of justice, as in vindictive justice, but rather reconciliation in friendship, which occurs when the offender makes recompense according to the will of the one whom he has offended. Thus, on the part of the penitent, it is required, first, that there be a will to make recompense, which takes place through contrition; secondly, that he submit himself to the judgment of the priest in God's place, which takes place in confession; thirdly, that he make recompense according to the judgment of the minister of God, which takes place in satisfaction. And therefore contrition, confession, and satisfaction are posited as the parts of Penance."

Proof 3. Directly against the Protestants

From what has been said it is shown by exclusion that the *false opinion of the innovators* is false, since it omits the very nature and foundation of Penance, and rests upon the false general principle concerning the effect of original sin and concerning justification by faith alone, the refutation of which belongs chiefly to the treatise *On Grace*. For terrors of conscience and confidence in the merits of Christ are neither contrition nor confession nor satisfaction nor absolution, but they entirely abstract from these acts.

Moreover, it is directly shown that the aforesaid terrors and faith do not belong to Penance.

First, concerning terrors of conscience

Penance is an act of reason, whereas the terrors arising from conscience or from knowledge of sin and divine judgment are rather movements of the sensitive appetite, common even to those who lack the use of reason, such as infants, or even reason itself, as brute animals do; they are not, therefore, parts of Penance, or of the penitent as such.

Penance, in the common understanding, means something free and voluntary which is done by a man; terrors, however, are something involuntary which a man undergoes.

Fear is understood to precede Penance, since whoever is induced to sorrow for past deeds out of fear is moved and corrected thereby; hence it is not a part of Penance.

Terrors are not necessarily connected with Penance; for Penance can be present without terrors, as when one repents from the motive of love, according to Luke 7:47: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much"; and terrors can exist without Penance, as is clear concerning King Belshazzar (Daniel 5:6, 9, 22 ff.), Antiochus (2 Maccabees 9:11 ff.), Felix the governor (Acts 24:25), and even the demons who, according to James 2:19, "believe, and tremble."

Second, concerning faith or confidence in Christ

This faith is either understood *theologically* and in the Catholic sense, namely as assent to the truths revealed (including the remission of sins through Christ's merits), and then it manifestly precedes and lays the foundation of Penance, according to John 3:5: "The men of Nineveh believed in God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth"[104]; or it is understood as *confidence in the remission of sins*, which is either confidence in a remission to be effected, and then it again precedes Penance, since by it a man is moved to repentance; or confidence in a remission already effected (the way Protestants seem to understand it), and then it follows upon the Penance itself which itself is ordered toward the remission of sins.

[104] Translator's note: The printed reference reads "Joan. 3, 5" (John 3:5), but the quotation is from Jonah 3:5. The printed reference has been retained in the translation.

Likewise, *mortification and vivification*, invoked by Calvin, cannot in any way be parts of Penance.

For mortification either is understood only passively, namely of the terrors of conscience themselves (as Calvin understands it in book 3 of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*), and then it cannot be a part of Penance, as has been said; or it is taken actively, in the proper sense of restraining evil passions (as appears to be the sense sometimes assigned to it by Calvin also), and then it cannot constitute Penance, both because Penance, according to Scripture, is the way toward justification (cf. Ezekiel 18:21 ff.; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22), whereas mortification, as Calvin acknowledges, is a fruit of justifying faith; and because mortification is found where Penance is not, namely in the just, who as such do not need Penance but do need mortification.

Likewise *vivification*, whether understood properly and in the Catholic sense as the practice of living well, or in the special sense which Calvin assigns to it (in the cited place of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*) as consolation, namely the fruit of justifying faith, follows Penance, which itself follows justification or the act of justifying faith in which, according to the Protestants, Penance is resolved. Moreover, vivification is not proper to penitents, but even and especially to the just who do not need Penance.

Article 4. Whether the sacrament of Penance consists essentially in the three acts of the penitent and the absolution of the priest, as in matter and form

ARTICLE IV. Whether the Sacrament of Penance Consists Essentially in the Three Acts of the Penitent and the Absolution of the Priest, as in Matter and Form (q. 84, a. 1, body and ad 1, 2, 3; a. 2; a. 3, body and ad 3; a. 4, ad 3; q. 86, a. 6; q. 90, a. 1, body and ad 2, 3; a. 2; a. 3).

STATE OF THE QUESTION

This question, disputed among theologians, has no small importance, both dogmatic, because of its immediate connection with the doctrine of faith established in the preceding article, and strictly theological, because of the controversies among theologians and its intimate connection with the sacramental character of Penance and with the general doctrine of the sacrament in common.

Three questions, moreover, are contained in the title of the article:

1. Whether the aforesaid acts are necessarily required *for the existence or validity of the sacrament*.

2. Whether they also belong *to the essence of the sacrament*, so as to be its constitutive parts, or its matter and form, and indeed in such a way that the acts of the penitent are the matter, while absolution is the form.

3. Whether *all and only the aforesaid acts* belong to the essence of the sacrament.

NEGATIVE AND AFFIRMATIVE POSITIONS

The theologians agree on three points:

1. That the interior acts of the penitent are absolutely required *for the existence of the sacrament*, since without man's cooperation the remission of actual sin cannot take place; while the exterior acts of the penitent are required at least ordinarily (so that without them the sacrament is invalid), by reason of the divine institution of the sacrament in the manner of a judgment and the consequent precept of exterior contrition and confession.

2. That absolution belongs to the very essence of the sacrament, at least as its principal part and its form.

3. That satisfaction, according to its accomplishment or execution, is not required for the existence of the sacrament, nor does it belong to its essence, but is only an integral part.

The point of controversy, however, is threefold:

1. Whether the exterior acts of the penitent (contrition, confession, and the manifestation of the proposed satisfaction) are absolutely necessary for the existence of the sacrament.

2. Whether these same acts of the penitent also belong to the essence of the sacrament, and are not merely external conditions required for the validity of absolution.

3. Whether all and only the acts of the penitent and absolution belong to the essence of the sacrament, so that satisfaction in deed and its manifestation are to be excluded, but not

satisfaction in intention, contrition, or absolution.

The opinions of theologians on these four questions can be reduced to three negative opinions and one affirmative opinion. The first, which belongs to a few modern theologians, replies negatively to the first question; the second, which is held by a number of Scotists, replies negatively to the second; the third, which belongs to certain ancient theologians, replies negatively to the third; the fourth, which is most common among ancient and modern theologians, replies affirmatively to the three questions.

After a brief exposition of the three negative opinions, we shall state and defend the affirmative opinion in a threefold conclusion.

FIRST OPINION — NEGATIVE

Of the four exterior acts which concur in the rite of Penance, *absolution alone is required for the existence or validity of the sacrament, simply and in every case*, so that, provided the other dispositions of the subject are present, absolution can be valid and the sacrament valid even if no exterior manifestation whatever of the interior acts takes place. Their exterior manifestation is required, however, by divine institution of this sacrament in the manner of a judgment and by the consequent precept of exterior contrition and confession.

Thus the whole essence of the sacrament consists in absolution, that is, in the form alone. Nevertheless, if one chooses to distinguish matter and form, absolution has the character of the latter, for the remote matter is sins, inasmuch as absolution has the power of signifying, or rather, of efficaciously signifying the remission of them; it is also the form.

The acts of the penitent are in no way the matter *of which* the sacrament is constituted, whether intrinsic and constitutive, but only the matter *about which* it is concerned; the interior acts are the matter about which it is concerned in a necessary way, whereas the exterior acts are matter about which it is concerned not absolutely necessarily, but only ordinarily, by reason of divine institution and precept.

The principal, indeed almost the sole, reason for this opinion, at least as it is distinguished from the following one,[105] is the present-day practice of absolving dying persons in whom no sign whatever of Penance, or of validity, is discerned; for they think that the absolution of a dying person who has given absolutely no sign of contrition and confession is valid.

[105] Billot, Galtier, Hervé, Génicot, Cappello, and Piscetta appropriately distinguish these opinions, as did Vázquez and the Salmanticenses among the older authors. Other authors, such as Pesch, Noldin, Ferreres, Prümmer, and Lercher, wrongly confuse them.

Probable traces of this opinion are found in Scotus and his earlier disciples. It seems first to have been expressly proposed by Ballerini († 1881), both in his notes on the moral theologian Gury (*Gury–Ballerini*) and more clearly in his *Moral Work* (*Ballerini–Palmieri*). It was followed by Berardi (*Praxis confessarii*, vol. 4, no. 2), and Génicot (no. 263) and Noldin (no. 224) favor it; these consider this opinion no less probable than the others.

Ballerini, presupposing that absolution alone belongs to the essence of the sacrament, thus endeavors to reconcile his opinion with the doctrine of the Church established at Trent: "There is nevertheless another sense in which contrition as well as confession can be said to belong to the essence, namely

inasmuch as they ought to be present. For, as stated at Trent, these acts are said to be required *by divine institution* and, as we say in their proper place, *by precept*; for God instituted the sacrament of Penance to be conferred by priests—not by any method whatever of conferring it, but in the manner of a judgment. In this judgment, moreover, by Christ's institution and precept, the penitent himself (who otherwise acts as the defendant on account of the most hidden sins) ought to bring forth his own accuser and thus himself disclose his sins under Christ's precept. Further, this self-accusation, to be distinguished from a historical narration, requires that the person accused have sorrow over some sin or some displeasure with it, and it presupposes that, in an adult, for reconciliation with God, some conversion to God is necessary. Therefore there is another sufficient reason why some contrition and some confession are necessary and essential (at least by precept), so that, if both, or even one, are entirely lacking, the sacrament is not merely unformed, but altogether null and invalid. I have said *if either is entirely absent*; for some disposition by divine institution is in some manner necessary by the nature of the thing for an adult's justification. But as regards an accusation of sins, it does not appear necessary and essential in such a manner that without it the sacrament cannot be confected, as we shall see when speaking of absolving a dying person deprived of his senses."[106]

[106] Ballerini–Palmieri, vol. 5, tract. 10, De Sacramentis, sect. 5, De Poenitentia, no. 8 (Prato, 1893), p. 6.

Scotus, *In IV Sent.*, dist. 14, q. 4, no. 2 ff.: "Penance is the absolution of a penitent man, made with certain words, with the due intention, pronounced by a priest having jurisdiction by divine institution, efficaciously signifying the absolution of the soul from sin. ... It is said ... that *Penance is absolution*, that is, a certain definitive sentence absolving the accused."

The same author, dist. 16, q. 1, no. 7: "Of the sacrament of Penance I say that those three [contrition, confession, and satisfaction] are in no way its parts; for, as has been said in distinction 14, the sacrament is that absolution sacramentally made with certain words, and so forth. No part of this, moreover, is contrition, which is something spiritual in the soul; nor is confession, which is nothing of the priest's sentence, but only the guilty person's accusation; nor is satisfaction, which follows that sacramental absolution. Yet those three things are required for the sacrament of Penance to be worthily received, either beforehand or afterward. For confession is simply required, since the priest does not absolve a person arbitrarily without having been accused before him, nor even does he use the form *I absolve thee* unless some contrition or attrition has preceded in the penitent. ... Satisfaction, moreover, must follow the sacrament of Penance so that it may have efficacy, and this either in deed or in intention."[107]

[107] Opera omnia, vol. 18 (Paris, 1894), pp. 139–140.

The *Reportata Parisiensia*, *In IV Sent.*, dist. 16, q. 1, no. 12 ff., read: "If we speak of penance as a sacrament, I say that those three [contrition, confession, and satisfaction] are not parts of penance, unless perhaps by extending the word *penance*, inasmuch as penance as a sacrament is nothing else than the audible form of words pronounced over the penitent by the priest."

"On the contrary, in the definition of it given above, those parts are placed there, it seems, because it is called the absolution *of a penitent man*; but no one is penitent unless, in some way, one of those three is present in him, namely contrition, or confession, or satisfaction; confession, too, is placed there when it says *made by a priest*; therefore they are parts of the thing defined."

"I reply that these are not placed in the definition of the sacrament of Penance as its parts, ... [but] they are certain congruous dispositions and the necessary presupposition for receiving the sacrament of Penance, which is absolution made by a priest with certain words. For sacramental absolution, which signifies an invisible interior effect in the penitent receiving the sacrament of Penance, presupposes and requires in him ... contrition for sin together with displeasure at it, and confession, or the declaration of it with its consequence, namely modesty and shame, so that the penitent may be capable of the sign of sacramental absolution, which is [the sign that is] the sacrament of Penance. ... A third part ... namely satisfaction, which is the performance of a laborious work with its penalty, follows absolution and the sacrament of Penance."[108]

[108] Ibid., p. 421.

The opinion of Scotus is interpreted in different ways.

According to some, Scotus teaches that the acts of the penitent are not absolutely necessary for the sacrament but are required only for its fitting reception; this is the interpretation of the Salmanticenses (no. 75, around the beginning), Ballerini, Galtier ("Scotus perhaps held this"), and Cappello ("Scotus perhaps holds this opinion").

According to others, Scotus teaches that these acts are necessary conditions, but denies that they are in any way parts of the sacrament; so Vázquez.

According to others, Scotus teaches that they are not only necessary conditions but also parts, though only integral and not essential parts; thus certain Scotists, especially the later ones.

Some authors interpret Scotus more favorably than even his own disciples do, saying that he teaches the acts of the penitent to be essential parts of the sacrament, not, however, properly *parts of its matter* (in which sense the Councils of Florence and Trent call them as it were matter), but in the sense that they are presupposed by that which properly constitutes the sacrament (for this is only absolution).

If Scotus's words are carefully attended to, it is probable, in accordance with his doctrine or at least with his intention, that the acts of the penitent are not absolutely necessary for the validity of the sacrament ("for this to be worthily received they are required," "they are certain congruous dispositions"); it is, however, more probable that Scotus teaches the acts to be necessary only as conditions ("they are required"; "absolution ... presupposes them and requires them ... so that the penitent may be capable of the sacramental sign").

Moreover, the other opinions appear altogether unsuitable, for Scotus, before denying that the acts of the penitent are in any way "parts" of the sacrament, expressly distinguishes between subjective, essential, and quantitative parts (which we now call integral parts), asking: "If [those three acts] were parts of penance, they would therefore be either integral or subjective parts; and here I take integral parts in the common way, namely as essential and quantitative parts" (cited dist. 16, q. 1, no. 2).[109]

[109] Ibid., vol. 24, p. 360.

SECOND OPINION — NEGATIVE

Absolution alone belongs to the essence of this sacrament, so that the essence consists in the form alone, or so that absolution possesses in itself the twofold character of matter and form, in the manner explained above concerning the preceding opinion. The acts of the penitent, however, are

only conditions indeed necessarily required for the validity of the sacrament and, in this respect, the matter about which it is concerned; or they are also extrinsic integral parts of its essence, that is, parts of Penance considered as a heterogeneous integral whole (as the head, chest, and feet are parts of a man), but not as an essential whole.

The principal reason for this opinion is that the signification and causality of this sacrament are preserved in absolution alone. This is evident both because absolution alone signifies the remission of sins, and because this sacrament is a judgment, which essentially consists in the sentence alone, and because absolution alone is given by the minister who confects the sacrament. It is confirmed both from the Council of Trent, which teaches that the acts of the penitent are *as it were* the matter of this sacrament and are required for its integrity, and from St. Thomas, who says in *In IV Sent.*, dist. 22, q. 2, a. 1, quaestiuncula 1, ad 2, that the acts of the penitent in this sacrament do not have a causative influence.

The precursor of this opinion is commonly said to have been Cardinal Robert Pullen (Robertus Pullus, an Englishman, † about 1146), although this must be drawn necessarily from his words, cited presently, which have been called into question. Scotus too teaches it, as quoted above (pp. 166–168); almost all Scotists, especially after the Council of Trent, distinguish between the requisites for the validity of the sacrament and its parts, and also between integral and essential parts. Among them are Frassen (*Scotus Academicus*, vol. 4, tract. 1, disp. 2, a. 2, q. 2, nos. 5 and 8), Hyquaeus, Bosco, Hieronymus de Montefortino, Herincx, Minges, Sporer, and very many others; to these may be added Maldonatus, S.J., and some modern moralists, such as Noldin and Génicot, insofar as they seem to concede a certain equal probability to this opinion and to the one which teaches that the acts of the penitent are essential parts of the sacrament.

Robert Pullen, *Sentences*, book 1, chapter 6, no. 61: "What is it for something to be remitted by absolution, unless it means that the sacrament of remission and absolution is performed? The absolution which, after confession has been made, is given over the penitent by the priest is a sacrament, because it is a sign of a sacred thing. And of what sacred thing is it a sign, if not remission and absolution? Clearly, the absolution from sins made by the priest to those confessing designates the remission of sins which contrition of heart had previously brought about. Therefore the priest looses from sins, not indeed because he remits the sins, but because he manifests by a sacrament that they have been remitted. And what need is there for such a manifestation, unless that consolation may be given to the penitent?" (M.L. 186, 910).

Scotus, in the passage cited above (pp. 166–168).

Maldonatus, *De Poenitentia*, p. 3, thesis 7, embraces the truer opinion of Scotus and, making a distinction, teaches that "in penance absolution, insofar as it is an external ceremony, is the matter; insofar as it has the power of signifying, it is the form."

Hieronymus de Montefortino, part 3, q. 90, a. 1: "Since sacramental absolution, inasmuch as it is the essence of the sacrament, is not just any absolution, but a rational, human act, by which it is fitting for the judicial sacrament to be brought to a conclusion and pronounced, it presupposes by necessity that in him who is to be absolved there exist certain acts by which the cause to be judged may be known to the judge."

Herincx, part 4, tractate 4, *On Penance*, disputation 1, no. 15: "The Scotists commonly hold that the acts of the penitent are called *as it were matter*, because they are not properly intrinsic and essential matter. ... This, however, seems to pertain only to a manner of speaking; ... for as to the substance of the matter, it is sufficiently clear that the essence or validity of the sacrament cannot subsist without contrition and confession."

Sporer, *Moral Theology*, vol. 3, part 3, no. 18: "Contrition and confession are undoubtedly essential parts in this sense and for this reason: without their actually being present, the essence of the sacrament of Penance, or a legitimate and valid absolution, simply cannot exist. In these terms all agree, and this is altogether certain from the Council of Trent. The reason too is clear: since the sacrament of Penance, as a true judgment, consists essentially in the accusation and absolution of the accused, some confession is thus an essential part of the sacrament of Penance, so that without its actual presence the essence of the sacrament cannot exist. But it is likewise most certain that just any confession of sins, made in any manner whatsoever, does not suffice; rather, a confession made with sorrow for sins, ordered to the blotting out of sin and to reconciliation with God, is required. Therefore some sorrow also is so essential a part of the sacrament of Penance that without its actual presence the sacrament cannot subsist."

Hyquaeus, in his commentary on Scotus, while setting forth the opinion of his master and of the other Scotists, undertakes to defend it:

"Concerning this passage of the Doctor [*In IV Sent.*, dist. 14, q. 4], several matters offer themselves for discussion. First, there is no slight controversy concerning what he directly lays down in his definition and the thing defined, namely, that the sacrament directly consists in absolution. Cajetan attacks this opinion in the third part, question 84, first article, asserting that the contrary is defined in the Florentine decree of union with the Armenians. Soto, in question 1, article 1 of the present question, says that it is foreign to the canonical manner of speaking. Vázquez, however, censures this manner of speaking as departing from common usage, saying that it is a question about a name; thus in his second doubt on the aforesaid article of St. Thomas. The second opinion is that the essence of Penance consists in the acts of the penitent alone, while absolution pertains to it indirectly, or as a complement to the essence of the sacrament. Certain Thomists hold this, such as Soto just cited, for he thus discusses all the sacraments, as was seen above in distinction 1, question 2. The third opinion is that the sacrament is essentially constituted both by absolution and by the other acts of the penitent. This is the opinion of St. Thomas in the place cited, and is more common among his modern disciples; it was followed also by the older writers, such as St. Bonaventure and Richard."

"The Doctor's conclusion, both here and in distinction 16, question 1, is that the sacrament consists directly in absolution, while the acts of the penitent are required indirectly. Major and others hold the same view. ... Among Catholics there is no controversy that all these things are necessarily required for the sacrament and by divine institution; only that in which the foundation of the sacramental signification consists is disputed. St. Thomas likewise taught this opinion in book 4, distinction 22, question 2, article 1."

"The conclusion is proved as Catholic, canonical, and more faithful to the proper nature of sacramental signification, and specifically to that of this sacrament, against the objections already mentioned. Through the efficacy of this sacrament sacramental grace is conferred, in which sins are remitted; but the remission of these sins is founded essentially upon the power of the keys, or the

jurisdiction given to priests to forgive or retain sins, the exercise of which is the absolution of the penitent. Therefore the efficacy of remission consists in absolution."

"The conclusion is proved, secondly: the acts of the penitent are required for penance insofar as they are necessary for the judicial act; therefore the essence of the sacrament consists, not in those acts themselves, but in the judicial act itself. And although this cannot be completed without them, nevertheless it is not by their power, but by the authority of which it is the mere exercise, that the act binds or absolves. The antecedent is proved. First, contrition is not required for Penance in any other manner than for the Baptism of an adult sinner; but there it is required only as a disposition, as is evident from Trent, session 6, chapters 5, 6, and 7, and not as something essentially belonging to the sacrament of Baptism. ... Likewise the antecedent is proved as regards confession: if the Church, from the form of the institution of sacramental Penance in the manner of a judgment, gathers that confession of sins was instituted, it follows that confession is required for Penance insofar as it is necessary for the information of the judge, and therefore only inasmuch as it expresses a precise ordering toward the judicial act, which is precisely what is maintained here."

"Thirdly, the antecedent is proved with regard to satisfaction, the third act of the penitent: for before satisfaction is completed, the sacrament of Penance is brought to completion. ... From this argument the antecedent becomes clear universally as regards the three acts of the penitent. The Councils define confession and contrition to be the matter of Penance no more than they define satisfaction to be so, for they equally and without distinction designate those three acts as matter. But it is certain that satisfaction does not belong to the essence of the sacrament; therefore neither do the other acts."

"Second conclusion: The acts of the penitent are indirectly the matter of this sacrament, and in this way are required for its integrity; without them the form would not have its effect, nor would it be a judicial act. This is the Doctor's opinion; although he does not use the expression *indirectly*, it is nevertheless evident from the definition of absolution, in which he speaks of the *penitent*. A man is penitent because he grieves for his sins, confesses them, and voluntarily punishes himself for them by suitable satisfaction."[110]

[110] In "Opera omnia Scoti," vol. 18 (Paris, 1894), pp. 141–147.

THIRD OPINION — NEGATIVE

Not all, and not only, the acts of the penitent and absolution belong to the essence of the sacrament. Four opinions are enumerated.

The *first opinion*, held by a few, says that not all three acts of the penitent belong to the essence of the sacrament, but that *contrition must be excluded*, since it is something not perceptible to the senses.

Thus Gabriel Biel (*In IV Sent.*, dist. 14, q. 2, a. 1), who says that the sacrament consists of a fourfold sensible sign—namely confession (which at the same time includes absolution)—and especially Durandus (*In IV Sent.*, dist. 14, q. 3; dist. 16, q. 1), who teaches that Penance consists in absolution alone and confession, while contrition and satisfaction are not parts of the sacrament in the strict or essential sense. For contrition is not something sensible, as is the sacrament itself; satisfaction, on the other hand, follows the sacrament, although it may be called a part in a broader sense, insofar as the term comprehends everything that is in any way required and due in the sacrament, whether antecedently, as an internal disposition (contrition), or subsequently, as the fruit of the sacrament

(satisfaction). To Durandus may be added Melchior Cano (*On Penance*, p. 6, q. 16), who teaches that contrition is nevertheless an integral part of the sacrament.

It is clear that this opinion, once the ambiguity has been removed as to the way in which contrition and satisfaction are said to be parts of the sacrament, does not differ from the fourth and common opinion to be set forth below. For its supporters teach that contrition is a part of the sacrament insofar as it is expressed externally by a sorrowful confession, and satisfaction is a part of the sacrament not through its actual performance, but through the intended satisfaction, externally signified in some manner.

The *second opinion*, attributed by some (for example, Suárez) to Domingo de Soto (*In IV Sent.*, dist. 14, q. 1), would have him teach that the acts of the penitent alone, and not absolution, are essential parts of the sacrament, because Penance is a certain act of penitence, whereas absolution is not an act of the penitent in the same manner as contrition, confession, and satisfaction.

Nevertheless, as the Salmanticenses correctly observe (disputation 1, doubt 2, no. 90), this opinion is improperly attributed to Soto. For he expressly asserts that the form of the sacrament of Penance belongs to its essence, and that without it the sacrament is not completed. If he also says that the acts of the penitent, but not absolution, are the essence of Penance, this is rightly understood to concern what the term *sacrament* stands for, as distinguished from the sacrament's signification, and its substance as distinguished from its essence. This is explained in his treatise *On the Sacraments in General*, article 4 (p. 109 ff.; cf. p. 54, 91, 415). Although, therefore, he includes both matter and form within the signification and essence of the sacrament, nevertheless, a sacrament, like other artifacts, stands for the matter alone, and its substance consists in matter alone.

The *third opinion* is that satisfaction *in its actual performance* belongs to the essence of the sacrament. In this sense the opinion of Peter of Osma and of the Council of Pistoia, condemned by the Church, is understood; this will be discussed in article 53.

The *fourth opinion*, especially that of certain older theologians, teaches that *the priest's imposition of hands* is a necessary part of this sacrament. The same opinion can also be understood of the necessity of the imposition of hands for constituting the essence of the sacrament; but it is perhaps better explained as an amplification of the occasion and of the signification. It will be discussed below, in article 82, where the question of the imposition of hands is expressly treated.

FOURTH OPINION — AFFIRMATIVE

All and only the four aforesaid acts are required for the existence of the sacrament and constitute its essence.

This is the most common opinion of theologians of every school, with the exception of almost all Scotists and the few others mentioned above. Certain Scotists also assent to it, such as Mastrius and Laurentius Brancatus. Thus St. Thomas expressly teaches, and therefore the Thomists are especially counted as its supporters, as is stated in the Council (vol. 2, pp. 188–190), and with him St. Bonaventure, as well as Alexander of Hales (*In IV Sent.*, q. 12, n. 2, a. 2), although the latter also seems to regard the imposition of hands as the matter of the sacrament.

THEOLOGICAL NOTE

There is a dispute among theologians, particularly modern ones, concerning whether, and what kind of, theological censure is to be assigned to the first and second opinions set forth above, in view of

the documents of the Church, especially the Council of Trent (chapter 3 and canon 4). The older theologians judge more severely; the modern ones, particularly among moral theologians, more mildly.

The older writers, who do not explicitly distinguish between the first and second opinions, reject the opinion of Scotus, denying that the acts of the penitent are intrinsic parts of the sacrament, as erroneous (by which word they often seem to mean "heretical"), or as unsafe in faith, or as rash (cf. Lugo, disputation 12, section 2, no. 20; Salmanticenses, disputation 1, doubt 2, no. 75).

First of all, Cajetan, writing before the Council of Trent, after relating the words of the Council of Florence in the Decree for the Armenians (which the older theologians regarded as an infallible document), adds: "Therefore the doctrine of Holy Mother Church shows that the opinions both of Scotus and of Durandus fall short [that is, are errors in faith]." Likewise the Salmanticenses, after citing the Councils of Florence and Trent, write: "From these, taken together, it most evidently appears that one cannot deny, without damage to faith, that this sacrament is essentially constituted from the acts of the penitent, as from its matter, and from the absolution of the priest, as from its form." "This conclusion is either of faith, or so proximate to faith that the contrary cannot be defended without danger of error [that is, error in faith or heresy]" (*On Penance*, disputation 1, doubt 2, no. 59).

Some, however, judge more mildly. Billuart says: "We do not assert that the opinion of Scotus was condemned by the Council; we merely seek to prove, by way of argument, that it agrees less well with the mind, decrees, and manner of speaking of the Council" (dissertation 1, article 2). Collet, after reporting the aforesaid censures of Cajetan and others, says: "Far be it from us ... to brand with such a blemish a school so eminently Catholic" (*On Penance*, part 2, chapter 3, article 2, no. 150).

Modern theologians, however, are constrained to distinguish the first opinion from the second, because the former arose more recently.

On the first opinion (Ballerini)

Pesch (proposition 4), although he does not explicitly distinguish between the two opinions, states generally: "The acts of the penitent—contrition, confession, and satisfaction—are rightly said to be the matter *of which* the sacrament of Penance is constituted. Theologically certain." And below: "Among Catholics it is agreed that the three acts of the penitent are required for this sacrament."

Galtier, referring expressly to Ballerini's opinion, says that it "enjoys no intrinsic probability," and "plainly contradicts the tradition of the Church concerning the judicial nature of Penance, and the Council of Trent, which teaches that the acts of the penitent are, as it were, the matter and integral parts of the sacrament" (*On Penance*, no. 377). He adds that the contrary opinion is certain from intrinsic arguments (no. 379).

Hervé (no. 250) repeats almost the same judgment.

Merkelbach (no. 437): "That opinion, being entirely more recent, has no foundation in the tradition of the Church."

All the authors to be cited below who condemn the second opinion are, with even greater reason, opposed to the first.

Génicot, however (no. 263), explicitly distinguishing the first from the second opinion, judges: "Only this need be remarked here for our purpose: by no judgment of the Church has this dispute between the Thomist and Scotist schools been settled. Indeed, as Pallavicini testifies in his celebrated *History of the Council of Trent* (book 12, chapter 10), the Fathers of Trent expressly took care that their decrees should not prejudice either opinion. Accordingly, it is permissible in practice to rely upon either opinion; nor ought things otherwise known to be permitted, for instance by the practice or approval of the Church, to be condemned on account of a theological opinion."

Piscetta–Gennaro (no. 618), likewise making the same distinction, simply concludes: "Whatever may be the value of the opinion of the Thomists and that of the Scotists, since the Church has condemned neither, either may be followed both theoretically and in practice. ... We do not depart from the common opinion."

Cappello (no. 29), referring directly to Ballerini's opinion, says: "This opinion also seems probable."

On the second opinion (of the Scotists)

De Augustinis (article 6, before thesis 18) says that the opinion opposed to the Scotists is defended by exceedingly weighty arguments taken from the Council of Trent.

Gihr (*On Penance*, § 7): "We say that this opinion [of the Scotists] can claim no solid probability for itself, at least since the Council of Trent."

Billot (thesis 3): "Since the time of Trent, theologians have so commonly agreed in asserting this doctrine that no sufficiently solid probability remains for the contrary opinion."

Pesch (no. 73) says that after the Tridentine decision, "at least Scotus's manner of speaking must be corrected, and it must no longer be said that the acts of the penitent are in no way parts of the sacrament." Compare also his words cited above concerning the first opinion.

D'Alès (thesis 3): "Insofar as [the thesis concerning the acts of the penitent as the matter, as it were, of the sacrament] is opposed to Scotus, it expresses the common doctrine, and cannot be denied without offense against the Tridentine decree, in such a way as to assert that the acts of the penitent are in no way parts of the sacrament."

Hugon (question 1, article 2, no. 7), citing the Councils of Florence and Trent and the Roman Ritual, says: "Accordingly, the Scotist opinion too must be abandoned, as is clear from the texts adduced."

Prümmer (no. 327) calls the common opinion, in contrast to the Scotist one, "safer and truer."

Merkelbach (no. 438) says that the common opinion is "more consonant with the traditional sense."

Galtier (no. 378), however, says: "The opinion [of the Scotists] is truly and solidly probable. It sufficiently preserves the judicial character of absolution; nor can the Tridentine definition be pressed absolutely against it, since it is known that the Council intended to abstain from a direct condemnation of that opinion."

Hervé (no. 250) makes Galtier's words his own.

Génicot and Piscetta–Gennaro have already been cited above.

Noldin (no. 224): "What is true in this question cannot be determined with certainty; both opinions [Thomist and Scotist] are probable, and neither is certain."

Cappello (no. 29): "We do not venture to deny the probability of the Scotist opinion, since it sufficiently preserves the judicial character of absolution, and the doctrine of the Council of Trent cannot be pressed absolutely against it."

Tanqueray (no. 178): "We freely acknowledge that the Scotists' opinion is not lacking in probability."

Vermeersch (no. 442): "Yet the differing opinion of Scotus is not improbable."

Considering the documents of the Church and the theological note derived from them in the preceding article (p. 159), it seems to us that the *first opinion* (Ballerini's) cannot be exempted from the censure of *rashness* (which is equivalently assigned in the words of Galtier and Pesch quoted above). For, first, the Church's teaching on the judicial character of this sacrament can scarcely be preserved in that opinion; secondly, it manifestly contradicts the doctrine of the Council, according to which the acts of the penitent "are required" for the integrity of the sacrament and are its "parts." Acts which either do not exist or are not perceptible to the senses cannot thus be called parts. Moreover, the indulgence with which a few modern doctors of moral theology absolve this opinion of every censure seems to have little weight in comparison with the severity of the judgment of dogmatic theologians, who are judging in their own proper field, especially if one also considers how severely those theologians, particularly the older ones, judge the Scotist opinion itself.

As regards the *Scotist opinion*, Scotus's own manner of speaking ("The acts of the penitent are in no way parts of the sacrament") is directly opposed to the manner of speaking of the Council of Trent; it can no longer be adhered to, and has rightly been abandoned by the Scotists themselves. Nor does the doctrine itself seem deserving of any solid intrinsic probability (thus with Billot and Gihr). For it is opposed to the judicial character of the sacrament itself (although it preserves the judicial character of absolution alone), and is opposed to the obvious sense of the Council's words teaching that the acts of the penitent are parts and, as it were, the matter of the sacrament, as will be explained more fully in the Conclusion. All the probability of this doctrine is extrinsic, and not great; it derives from the fact that it is defended by a few theologians and judged to be intrinsically probable by certain others.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion 1. Absolution, contrition, confession, and satisfaction necessarily belong to the existence or validity of the sacrament, so that without all of them the sacrament cannot exist.

Proof 1. From the penitential nature of this sacrament.

As we have already observed against the Protestants in the preceding article (p. 161 ff.), this sacrament is penance, and not merely a rite of simple remission, like Baptism. Therefore, as such, it cannot consist without acts—and indeed external acts—of the penitent himself, namely, manifested contrition, in which confession and satisfaction are implicitly contained in some way.

Proof 2. From the judicial nature of this sacrament.

According to the constant teaching of the Church, established above (article 1) from Scripture and Tradition, this sacrament is exercised after the manner of a judgment, so that absolution is a true judicial act, as the Council of Trent also expressly defined (canon 9). Therefore it necessarily requires, besides the external pronouncement of the sentence, some knowledge of the cause, without which judgment cannot be exercised, as the Council of Trent also expressly teaches (chapter 5).

But this knowledge of the cause cannot be had without an act of the penitent manifesting it, since the matter in question is something internal, known only to him, namely, the state of his conscience; nor can it be had without the threefold act of manifested contrition, confession, and the purpose of making satisfaction, since all these are required in the cause and in the subject by the nature of this judgment, which is remissive only for a contrite man (hence the necessity of contrition), and is not simply remissive but also vindicative (hence the necessity of imposed satisfaction), nor is it simply vindicative but rather reconciliatory (hence the necessity of a voluntary purpose of making satisfaction).

Consequently, this sacrament cannot consist without the absolution of the priest and the act of the penitent, indeed a threefold act: contrition, by which the man becomes his own accuser; confession, by which he becomes a witness to his own offense; and satisfaction, by which he becomes the executor of the sentence laid upon him.

Proof 3. From the fact that, according to the Council of Trent, absolution is the form, whereas the acts of the penitent are as it were the matter and integral parts of this sacrament.

That external absolution is required for the validity of the sacrament is disputed by no one, since the Council teaches that "in it the power of the sacrament is principally situated" (chapter 3). But no intelligible explanation can be given of how acts of the penitent which do not exist, or which are not sensible, could be called as it were the matter and integral parts of a sensible sacrament.

Moreover, in Baptism too, in the case of an adult, the internal acts of faith and attrition are required; yet neither the Council (session 6, chapter 6) nor any theologian has ever thought that they could be called as it were the matter or a part of that sacrament, but only dispositions of the recipient.

Moreover, *at least confession* is manifestly taken by the Council as an act of external confession, which it treats throughout chapter 5 of session 14. Hence the question again arises how confession itself could be called as it were the matter and a part of the sacrament if it were not absolutely necessary for the existence of the latter.

Proof 4. From the following Conclusion, in which it is established that absolution and the acts of the penitent are essential parts of the sacrament and therefore are a fortiori necessary for its existence. Moreover, all the other arguments to be adduced there shortly also hold directly, and a fortiori, for the present Conclusion. The difficulty, however, which the opponents draw from the case of the absolution of a dying man deprived of his senses, will be resolved below in the Reply to Objection 1.

Conclusion 2. Not only absolution but also the acts of the penitent belong to the very essence of the sacrament as its constitutive parts; consequently, the acts of the penitent stand as the matter, while absolution stands as the form, of the sacrament.

First and foremost, the assertion is proved. Proof 1. From the properly sacramental nature of this sacrament.

According to the very common teaching of theologians, which we have said in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General* (article 4, p. 91 ff.) to be theologically certain, since it is explicitly contained in the documents of the Church, every sacrament consists of matter and form, "by which the essence of the sacrament is completed," as the Council of Trent says when treating of Penance itself (chapter 2).

But the Councils do not assign, nor can there be assigned, any other matter of which the external sacrament of Penance essentially consists than the acts of the penitent themselves.

For such matter cannot be sins themselves, considered in themselves, since they are something internal, and their external manifestation is nothing other than the acts of contrition, confession, and satisfaction themselves.

Nor can *absolution itself* in any way be called the matter, inasmuch as, according to the explanation of certain opponents set forth above on pp. 165 and 169, it is matter as a ceremony and form as possessing signification, or matter as signifying and form as effecting. For, as was said in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General* (article 4, p. 103), in a sacrament of the New Law, besides the composition of the relation of the sign to its subject, there is found in the subject itself another composition, likewise physical, about which precisely the question is raised when one inquires into the matter and form of the sacrament. Hence in the ceremony itself which underlies the signification of the sacrament of Penance there must be found a twofold element, namely matter and form. Consequently absolution, even as a ceremony, can be only a single element, and indeed the formal one; nor is there another element to be found except in the acts of the penitent himself, since, as will be said below (article 82), the imposition of hands is not an essential or necessary part of the sacrament.

Moreover, as is evident from what was said in that same treatise (especially articles 2 and 4), signification and efficacy can be considered in two ways: either in the physical order, in which case they converge in a single formal principle (the practical sign), which is the ultimate form of the composite artifact that is the sacrament; or in the metaphysical order, in which case they stand as matter or genus (sign) and form or specific difference (practical). But in the first way neither of these is matter; and in the second way they are not considered here, because, as has been said, the question concerns the physical composition of the sacrament.

Proof 2. From the penitential nature of this sacrament.

This sacrament is essentially penitential, and in this it differs from the other sacraments, especially from Baptism itself, in which certain acts of penance are also required. But this sacrament is not formally penitential on the part of absolution, from which it directly takes only that it is judicial; therefore it is such on the part of the acts of the penitent, which consequently belong to its essence and are not merely dispositions or conditions, as in Baptism.

This is confirmed by the very manner of speaking by which this sacrament is called in Tradition and which is understood to refer to its very essence. For it is frequently called the sacrament of *Penance* or of *Confession*, just as Baptism is customarily called the sacrament of washing; therefore the acts of the penitent and confession are understood to belong to its essence, just as washing belongs to the essence of Baptism.

Proof 3. From the judicial nature of the sacrament itself.

This sacrament was essentially instituted after the manner of a judgment or judicial proceeding, according to the Council of Trent (chapter 2: "before this tribunal").

The same Council (chapter 8) says that "the sacrament of Penance is a tribunal"; compare the Fourth Lateran Council: "a penitential judgment."

But to the essence of a judgment there belongs not only the judicial sentence, but also the act of the accuser and of the witness, from whom the judge acquires knowledge of that concerning which he

must judge.

Yet in this sacramental judgment there is no accusation or testimony other than that of the penitent himself, since on the one hand contrition, or the accusation of his own person, is required, and on the other hand the matter concerns something known to him alone, namely, his state of conscience.

Therefore not only absolution, or the sentence of the priest, belongs to the essence of this sacrament, but also contrition, or the accusation made by the penitent, and confession, or the testimony given by the same person. The purpose of making satisfaction is derived, as was said in the preceding Conclusion, from the peculiar nature of this judgment, which is neither simply remissive nor simply vindicative, but reconciliatory and compensatory.

Accordingly, in the Scotist position, which teaches that the acts of the penitent are extrinsic parts of the sacrament, the judicial proceeding is indeed preserved, but not a *sacramental* judicial proceeding. For the sacrament would consist in absolution alone, or a sentence concerning the dispositions of the subject; hence there would be a sacramental sentence, but not a sacramental judicial proceeding.

Some object, however, ineptly, that only knowledge of the cause and the judicial sentence are required for the essence of a judgment, and not the accusation and testimony of the defendant himself, still less the purpose of making satisfaction, which are required in no judgment in the external forum.

For, first, in every judgment in the external forum not just any knowledge suffices (for example, that which the judge might perhaps acquire from elsewhere), but only knowledge obtained from the accuser and the witnesses; otherwise the judicial sentence is invalid. Hence, for a penitential judgment, knowledge of the cause which the priest might have otherwise than from the penitent, the accuser and witness of his own offense, would not suffice. Indeed, he cannot have such knowledge apart from revelation, since the judgment concerns not an external sin but the internal state of the conscience of the person judged.

Secondly, although in a judgment of the external forum the accusation and confession of the accused himself and the purpose of making satisfaction are not required, these are required by the peculiar character of a sacramental judgment: both because in this judgment knowledge of the cause can be obtained in no other way, and because it concerns a remissive and reconciliatory judgment, as has already been said.

Proof 4. FROM THE TEACHING OF THE COUNCILS OF FLORENCE AND TRENT.

The *Council of Florence*, in its Decree for the Armenians, says that "all the sacraments are perfected by three things, namely, things as matter, words as form, and the person of the minister conferring the sacrament" (Denzinger 695). Then, speaking of Penance, it adds that the three acts of the penitent are as it were the matter of this sacrament (Denzinger 699, cited in article 1, p. 63). Therefore these acts perfect the sacrament of Penance, or pertain to its essence, no less than the form itself.

The opponents object that in these words there is a twofold qualifying addition, from which it is understood, on the contrary, that the acts of the penitent do not pertain to the essence of the sacrament: for, on the one hand, they are called *as it were matter*, whereas absolution is called simply the form; and, on the other hand, they are joined with the *person of the minister*, who is admittedly something extrinsic to the essence of the sacrament.

Reply. The expression "as it were matter" will be explained below, where, in the meantime, it should be noted that it cannot contradict the word "matter," which in the earlier text is used without distinction of all the sacraments.

Nor does it follow from the addition of the person of the minister that the acts of the penitent do not belong to the essence of the sacrament; otherwise the same would also follow regarding the form of absolution. The Council therefore intended to bring together in a single expression three things required for the perfection or validity of the sacrament, namely the thing, the words, and the minister, but in such a way that, from the different character of these very things, their manner of contributing to validity is understood: namely, the thing and the words *intrinsically*, but the minister *extrinsically*. This distinction is sufficiently indicated by the Council itself when it says that the thing and the words concur in perfecting the sacrament *as matter and form*, whereas the minister concurs *as the person conferring the sacrament*. Hence the *Council of Trent*, session 14, chapter 2, explaining the Florentine Council, says: "The essence of the sacrament is perfected by matter and form."

Furthermore, even the minister himself, taken formally as the one conferring the sacrament, or the very action of the minister as conferring it, constitutes the essence of the sacrament, insofar as it is identified with the proximate matter (thus in Baptism, Confirmation, Extreme Unction, and Orders; for the proximate matter of Baptism is the washing itself, which is an active action of the minister), or at least with the form (in all the sacraments).

Accordingly, in the text of the Council the word "perfect" can be understood in its full sense, for "constitute," even insofar as it refers to the minister or to the action of the minister, as the very expression "the person of the minister conferring the sacrament" suggests; all the more so because there is no mention there of proximate matter itself, but only of remote matter (the thing). For this reason the *Roman Ritual* (cited in the preceding article, p. 161) does not hesitate to assert expressly: "For the constituting of that sacrament [Penance] three things concur: matter, form, minister"; and St. Thomas applies this manner of speaking even to the subject himself, saying: "The sinner himself ..."

"... who confesses is as matter in this sacrament" (*Opusculum, On the Form of Absolution*, chapter 4).[111]

[111] Why the Council does not also number the subject among the things by which the sacrament is perfected has been explained in the treatise On the Sacraments in General, article 23, p. 349.

THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

The *Council of Trent*, in chapter 3 (cited in the preceding article, p. 160), teaches *three things* in which it equivalently contains the assertion that the acts of the penitent also belong to the essence of the sacrament: namely, that the acts of the penitent are *as it were matter*; that they are *parts of the sacrament required for its integrity*; and that the *power of the sacrament resides principally in its form*.

FIRST. According to the Council, absolution is the form, whereas the acts of the penitent are as it were the matter of the sacrament. Now, as the Council itself teaches, "the essence of the sacrament is perfected by matter and form" (chapter 2, cited in article 1, pp. 65–66).

The opponents object that from the very qualifying addition ("as it were") it appears that the Council is speaking, not of constitutive matter, or the matter *out of which* the sacrament is made, but only of the matter *about which* it is concerned.

Reply. The qualifying term does not refer formally to matter taken sacramentally, but to matter insofar as it is also taken physically for a sensible thing. Thus by those words the Council intended to express two things properly and as unambiguously as possible: namely, that the acts of the penitent are indeed matter sacramentally (therefore it employs the word "matter"), but are not also matter physically, as are water in Baptism and chrism in Confirmation (therefore it adds the qualification "as it were").

That this is *first and foremost, and beyond any doubt*, the meaning of those words is explicitly declared by the Catechism of the Council of Trent, cited in the preceding article (p. 161).

The Scotist Henno, however, ineptly objects against this explanation that, if the Council called the acts of the penitent *as it were matter* because they are not some material substance, it should likewise have called absolution *as it were form*, since absolution itself is not some material substance.

For the parallel is denied: in no sacrament is the form a substance, whereas the matter, at least in four sacraments and principally so, is some material thing; hence it is understandable why the Council wished to indicate this difference by appending the qualification "as it were" to the matter of Penance.

The aforesaid objection of Henno could rather be turned against himself in this way: if the Council called the acts of the penitent *as it were matter* because they are not properly matter, it should similarly have called absolution *as it were form*, because on that supposition absolution too would not be properly called form...

...since there cannot be form in the proper sense where there is no matter in the proper sense. For this reason St. Thomas, in order to impress the difference between the matter and form of a natural composite and the matter and form of an artificial composite (such as a sacrament), not infrequently adds a qualifying term both to the matter and to the form of a sacrament. Thus, in question 84, article 3, he says: "Those things which are on the part of the penitent ... are *as it were the matter* of this sacrament; but those which are on the part of the priest are related *in the manner of form*."

Moreover, the same thing is clear from the teaching of St. Thomas, from whose little work *On the Articles of Faith and the Sacraments of the Church* the Council of Florence drew these words and transmitted them to the Tridentine Council. For the Holy Doctor holds the acts of the penitent to be true matter understood sacramentally (question 84, article 2: "The proximate matter of this sacrament is the acts of the penitent"; compare the same question, article 1, reply to objection 1; question 90, article 2). At the same time, to distinguish the matter of Penance (and likewise of Matrimony) from the matter of the other sacraments, insofar as this is something physical in both, he often adds a qualifying expression (ibid., article 1, reply to objection 1: "The sensible human acts themselves are *in place of matter*"; ibid., reply to objection 2: "In the sacrament of Penance human acts are *for matter*"; ibid., article 4, reply to objection 3: "Those things which are on the part of the penitent are held *in place of matter*").

Here are certain texts from which it manifestly appears that, for the Holy Doctor, "to be true sacramental matter," "to be in place of matter, or for matter," and "to be of the essence of the sacrament" are one and the same.

Question 84, article 1, reply to objection 1: "By the name of bodily things [or matter] are understood in a broad sense even the sensible outward acts themselves, which are so related in this sacrament as water is in Baptism or chrism in Confirmation. But it must be observed that in those sacraments in which an excellent grace is conferred, which surpasses every capacity of a human act, some external bodily matter is employed; as in Baptism, where the full remission of sins is made both as to guilt and as to punishment; and in Confirmation, where the fullness of the Holy Ghost is given; and in Extreme Unction, where perfect spiritual health is bestowed, which proceeds from the virtue of Christ as from a certain extrinsic principle. Hence, if there are any human acts in such sacraments, they are not *of the essence of the sacraments*, but are related dispositively to the sacraments. But in those sacraments which have an effect corresponding to human acts, the sensible human acts themselves are *in place of matter*, as happens in Penance and Matrimony; just as among bodily medicines some things are applied outwardly, such as plasters and electuaries, while others are acts of those being healed, such as certain exercises." *Ibid., article 2:* "It has been said (in the preceding article, replies to objections 1 and 2) that the *proximate matter* of this sacrament is the acts of the penitent, whose matter is ..."

"... the sins for which he grieves, which he confesses, and for which he makes satisfaction. Hence it follows that the remote matter of Penance is sins, not to be accepted, but to be detested and destroyed."

Ibid., article 1, reply to objection 2: "In the sacraments which have bodily matter, that matter is applied by a minister of the Church, who bears the person of Christ, as a sign that the excellence of the power operating in the sacrament is from Christ. But in the sacrament of Penance, as has been said (in the preceding solution), human acts are *for matter*, and these proceed from interior inspiration. Hence the matter is not applied by the minister, but by God operating inwardly; yet the minister supplies the complement of the sacrament when he absolves the penitent."

Ibid., article 3: "Those things which are on the part of the penitent, whether words or deeds, are *a certain matter* of this sacrament; whereas those things which are on the part of the priest are related *in the manner of form*."

Ibid., reply to objection 1: "The acts of the penitent ... are, in a certain manner, materially related in this sacrament, but not in Baptism or Confirmation."

Ibid., article 4, reply to objection 3: "In the sacraments which are perfected through the use of matter, the minister exercises some bodily act upon the one who receives the sacrament, as in Baptism, Confirmation, and Extreme Unction. But this sacrament does not consist in the use of any externally applied matter: rather, those things which are on the part of the penitent are held *in place of matter*. Hence, just as in the Eucharist the priest perfects the sacrament by the pronouncement of words alone over the matter, so too the words alone of the priest absolving the penitent perfect the sacrament of absolution. And if any bodily act were necessary on the part of the priest, the sign of the cross would be no less suitable, which is used in the Eucharist, than the imposition of hands, as a sign that sins are remitted through the blood of Christ's Cross; and yet it is not necessary to this sacrament, just as it is not necessary to the Eucharist."

Question 86, article 6: "The ... human acts which are on the part of the sinner are materially related in the sacrament of Penance. But every sacrament produces its effect not only by the power of the form,

but also by the power of the matter; *for from both together there is one sacrament*." *Question 90, article 1:* "It has been said above (question 84, articles 2 and 3) that in the sacrament of Penance human acts are related in the manner of matter."

Ibid., article 2: "Every sacrament is distinguished into matter and form, as into essential parts. ... The acts of the penitent ... are the matter of this sacrament."

Opusculum, On the Form of Absolution, chapter 4: "It is clear that in every sacrament the words coming to the matter perfect the sacrament. For in the sacrament of the Eucharist the words alone pronounced over the matter to be consecrated perfect the sacrament. In Baptism, likewise, words pronounced over the water alone ..."

"... do not make the sacrament, but the words pronounced over the water applied in Baptism [that is, through the washing], because the whole is *in place of matter*. But *the sinner himself confessing is as matter* in this sacrament. Hence the words of absolution pronounced over him bring about the sacrament of Penance."

Finally, from the very teaching of both Councils, of Florence and of Trent, it is apparent that the words "as it were matter" must be understood of the very matter *out of which* the sacrament is composed.

For the Councils (and likewise the *Roman Ritual*, recently cited) assert that every sacrament is composed of matter and form "by which the essence of the sacrament is perfected" (Council of Trent, chapter 2); and they assign no other matter to Penance than the acts of the penitent, which they call "as it were matter." Therefore this "as it were matter" is the very matter which, together with the form, essentially perfects the sacrament.

Likewise, and still more explicitly, the Council of Trent calls the essential parts of Penance simply *matter*, without any qualification, when it teaches that Penance differs most widely from Baptism "in matter and form, by which the essence of the sacrament is perfected" (chapter 2; compare also the Council of Constance, cited on p. 63).

Furthermore, if by "as it were matter" the Council meant only the matter *about which*, it is not clear with what propriety it could say this, since absolution concerns sins and not the acts of the penitent; for one cannot be absolved from contrition, confession, and satisfaction. Likewise it would follow that the acts of penance required in Baptism could be called as it were the matter of Baptism, and that absolution could be called as it were the form of Penance, since matter and form correspond to one another and there can be no form properly so called where there is no matter properly so called.

You will say: According to Pallavicini, *History of the Council of Trent*, book 12, chapter 10 (compare also Theiner, *Acts*, after session 13), the Council, after the discussions of the theologians on either side, deliberately adopted the expression "as it were matter," lest it appear to favor any one definite opinion. Therefore the question here is not of matter properly so called and *out of which*, as against the determinate Scotist position.

Reply. One should attend rather to what the Council in fact taught in the final redaction of its decrees than to what had preceded in the discussions of the conciliar theologians. Moreover, the authors of the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, who were present at the Synod, expressly disclose the mind of the Council. From their account of the proceedings during the preparation of this decree, however, we

know this with certainty: the Fathers refrained from a fuller determination of the doctrine on account of the aforesaid proposal and were content to reproduce the Florentine formulas. But the meaning of those formulas, as has been shown, can by no means be called ambiguous.

SECOND. The Council calls the acts of the penitent parts of the sacrament, and indeed parts required for its integrity. It numbers them together with the form of absolution under the same chapter 3, whose title or subject concerns the parts and effect of this sacrament (chapter 3, toward the end: "These things concerning the parts and effect of this sacrament").

Therefore, from the fact that the acts of the penitent are parts, indeed parts required for integrity, it follows that they are not mere conditions or dispositions: for parts in whatever way compose the whole, and things which contribute to the integrity of a thing are intrinsic to it, at least as integral parts. Hence Scotus, speaking sincerely and logically and regarding these acts as mere dispositions, simply denied that they were in any way parts of the sacrament.

Moreover, from the fact that they are enumerated, under the common heading "On the Parts of the Sacrament," together with the form, which is an essential and constitutive part of the sacrament, it follows that, in the mind of the Council, they have the same character of essential parts of the sacrament, especially if it is further observed that they are enumerated with the form under the concept of matter, or as it were matter.

The opponents object that from the very qualifying addition, and indeed the explicit definition of parts added by the Council ("which, insofar as ... they are required for the integrity of the sacrament, are for this reason called parts of Penance"), it plainly appears that the question is not of intrinsic and essential parts, but only of integral parts. "For if," Ballerini says emphatically (*Moral Work*, vol. 5, no. 7), "the Tridentine Fathers had intended to establish that those parts belong to the essence of the sacrament, were they such simpletons as not to write *for the essence*, but foolishly to say *for the integrity*? Did they not know that these two things are separated by an infinite distance?"

Reply. First, it must be observed that the Council does not precisely assert that the acts of the penitent are *integral parts*, but that they are *parts required for integrity*, which can be understood thus: "Things which are required for the integrity or perfection of the sacrament" (in accordance with what it teaches in chapter 2: "The essence of the sacrament is perfected by matter and form").

Secondly, these words refer directly, not to the acts taken collectively, under which aspect they were immediately before called as it were the matter of the sacrament, but to the acts taken individually; and thus it is verified in a stricter sense that they are required for integrity—that is, that they are parts more properly integrating the whole. Yet this does not exclude their belonging to the essence of the sacrament, insofar as they constitute its very matter. For there is a twofold kind of integral parts: namely, those which integrate the essence itself, so that without them the essence cannot be preserved (for example, the head and heart in the human body), and those which integrate only its complementary perfection, so that without them the essence of the thing can subsist (for example, the hands and feet in the human body).

We say, therefore, that according to the Council the acts of the penitent are parts integrating the essence of this sacrament. For those acts, taken individually, are not the matter of Penance; rather, their complex taken together is, as will be explained in the following article.

Forgetting this refined distinction, Ballerini ineptly asserts that "belonging to the essence" and "belonging to the integrity" are separated by an infinite distance, and that the Council could only foolishly have said that the acts of the penitent belong to integrity if it had wished to say that they belong to the essence. The Council could indeed have said here more determinately and explicitly that those acts belong to the integrity *of the essence*; and it is likely that it refrained from that determination lest the Scotist opinion seem explicitly condemned. But it was by no means necessary, since in the immediately preceding chapter 2 it had explicitly and equivalently asserted this, teaching that "this sacrament ... differs from Baptism ... in matter and form, by which the essence of the sacrament is perfected." Surely the Fathers were not so foolish that, while asserting in chapter 3 that the acts of the penitent are as it were matter and integrating parts of the sacrament, they forgot what they had said in chapter 2, namely that this same matter perfects the essence of the sacrament?

They insist: The Council says without discrimination or distinction that contrition, confession, and satisfaction are parts of the sacrament. Yet satisfaction is not an essential part, but only an integral one. Therefore the same holds for contrition and confession.

Reply. At least this follows against what Scotus and some of his followers assert: that these three acts are not the matter *about which*, or mere extrinsic conditions, since every integral part (even a nonessential one) is something from which the whole itself results.

Furthermore, the assumption of the minor premise and the consequence of the argument are denied. For satisfaction can be considered in two ways: in the *purpose* and in the *execution*. We assert that the purpose of making satisfaction is an essential part, whereas satisfaction itself according to its execution is only an integral part (compare below, article 70). The Council, however, speaking of satisfaction collectively and indeterminately, leaves to the intelligent theologian the task of distinguishing the thing and applying it according to the subject matter; indeed, as some think, it deliberately used the indeterminate expression "parts required for integrity," so that this would suit all parts of Penance, including satisfaction in deed, in keeping with the proper nature of each, that is, whether in the sense of an essential integral part or of a merely integral part.

They insist again: In chapter 4 the Council says that attrition is a disposition for the sacrament: "Although without the sacrament of Penance it cannot of itself bring the sinner to justification, nevertheless it disposes him ...

... to obtain the grace of God in the sacrament of Penance" (Denzinger 898).

Reply. The Council does not say that attrition is *only* a disposition; indeed, in chapter 3 it explicitly asserts that it is a part of the sacrament. It is therefore at once a disposition *before* the sacrament and a part *within* the sacrament. From the text and context of the words adduced in the objection, it is clear that in chapter 4 the Council teaches only this: that attrition, or imperfect contrition, although it cannot justify without the sacrament, is nevertheless a good and salutary thing and disposes one to receive justification in the sacrament, of which, as it had taught in chapter 3, attrition itself is one part.

THIRD. In the same chapter 3 the Council asserts that the power or efficacy of this sacrament is situated principally in its form.

From this it is legitimately concluded that this power, although not principally, resides also in the acts of the penitent, which after the form are there enumerated among the parts of the sacrament. Now, sacramental power can reside only in the essence of the sacrament. Therefore those acts pertain to the essence of the sacrament.

Some Scotists, however, ineptly attempt to turn an argument in their own favor from these very words, reasoning as follows: the Council says that the power of this sacrament is situated principally in its form; therefore it places the essence of this sacrament in the form of absolution alone. For it does not say this concerning the other things of the sacrament; moreover, if the acts of the penitent, as it were the matter, also belonged to the essence of the sacrament, the power of the sacrament would reside in them no less principally.

Reply. It is denied that the power of the sacrament resides equally principally in matter and form: for, just as the being of any thing depends principally upon its form, so too does its operation. The Council therefore judged it fitting to recall here this general doctrine, well known to anyone even a novice in metaphysics, since, as the matter of this sacrament consists in the very acts of the penitent, which also have the character of dispositions to justification, someone might think that the virtue of this sacrament consists in the very efficacy of the work wrought by those dispositions, rather than in the efficacy of the operation wrought by the rite itself. But that rite is composed, both and principally, from the form of absolution and from the acts of the penitent themselves insofar as they underlie that form, considered formally apart from their dispositive character.

The following words of St. Thomas are relevant, whose teaching the Council again confirmed briefly and solemnly in the aforesaid expression:

Question 86, article 6: "Penance is a virtue insofar as it is the principle of certain human acts. But human acts which are on the part of the sinner are related materially in the sacrament of Penance. Every sacrament, however, produces its effect not only by the power of the form, but also by the power of the matter; for from both there is one sacrament, as was held above (question 60, article 6, reply to objection 2; and article 7)."

"Hence, just as the remission of guilt takes place in Baptism not only by the power of the form, but also by the power of the matter, namely water—although more principally by the power of the form, from which the water itself receives its power—so also the remission of guilt is an effect of Penance, principally indeed by the power of the keys held by the ministers, on whose part is taken what is formal in this sacrament, as was said above (question 84, article 3); but secondarily also from the power of the acts of the penitent belonging to the virtue of penance. Yet these acts function in a certain way as ordered to the keys of the Church. And thus it is clear that the remission of guilt is an effect of penance insofar as it is a virtue, but more principally insofar as it is a sacrament."

Proof 5. FROM THE TEACHING OF ST. THOMAS.

Not only the mind but the very words of the Holy Doctor are so manifest in the same testimonies cited above from questions 84, 86, and 90 that anyone who undertook to prove that St. Thomas teaches the acts of the penitent to be essential parts of the sacrament would seem to be attempting to prove what has already been decided. Nevertheless, since one or another author, especially among the moderns and notably Ballerini, has dared to maintain the contrary, it will not be out of place to

discuss briefly the principal, or almost the only, text which they invoke in their favour from the *Commentary on the Sentences*.

Here is the text under accusation, *In IV Sent.*, distinction 22, question 2, article 1, question 1, reply to objection 2:

"The matter which in the other sacraments is a sacramental sign, insofar as it is given from without, represents an external agent in sanctification; and therefore it belongs to it in some manner [that is, by physically disposing, according to the teaching of the younger St. Thomas] to cause grace, as was said [in distinction 1]. But exterior penance, which is the sacramental sign in this sacrament, represents the cooperation of the recipient, and not the influence which comes from an extrinsic agent; and therefore it does not belong to it to cause grace in any manner." (Compare ibid., reply to objection 3.)

From this the adversaries argue: According to St. Thomas, the causative power proper to the essence of the sacrament belongs to absolution alone, and not to the acts of the penitent; therefore, according to St. Thomas, absolution alone belongs to the essence of the sacrament.

Reply.

1. As to the consequent: It is denied. For the Holy Doctor, in the very words objected and throughout article 1, explicitly asserts that the acts of the penitent are the sacramental sign itself. Hence the objection collapses, and the adversaries' intention is frustrated.

2. As to the antecedent: The doctors do not all hold one and the same view.

Some concede that St. Thomas attributes causative power to the form of absolution alone, but grants only significative power to the matter, or acts of the penitent. Indeed, Ferrariensis (*In Contra Gentiles*, IV, chapter 72) holds that the Holy Doctor taught the same thing also in the *Summa*, and, concerning his words in question 86, article 6 (cited above), observes that St. Thomas grants some power to the acts of the penitent not by reason of themselves but by reason of the form with which they are joined, so that, properly speaking, all that power is on the side of the form. But since this explanation seems manifestly contrary to the letter of the aforesaid text in question 86, article 6, Cajetan (here, on articles 1 and 2) thinks that in the *Summa* the Holy Doctor changed his opinion, or formed a higher conception of the nature and causality of the sacraments. This opinion is indeed probable. But because the context of the passage objected from the *Sentences* by no means compels us to invoke such a retraction, therefore—

Others, such as the Salmanticenses (disputation 1, doubt 2, no. 87) and Billot (thesis 3, reply to objection 4), more suitably deny that St. Thomas excludes the acts of the penitent from the sacramental causative influence; or rather they make the following distinction. In the passage from the *Sentences*, the Holy Doctor considers the acts of the penitent in two ways: first, according to themselves and on the part of the subject, or insofar as they "represent the cooperation of the recipient" (as in the text objected); secondly, formally as a part of the sacrament and, as it were, on the part of the minister, or insofar as "they are joined to the act of the minister" (a little later, in the solution to the second little question). Under the former consideration he denies that they have causative power; under the latter he affirms it.

This is clear:

First, from the objection to which St. Thomas replies in the passage objected. Against it he needed only to oppose the fact that the acts of the penitent, taken according to themselves as subjective dispositions, have no causative power, although they have such power if taken objectively as a part of the sacrament. For the objection runs thus: "The sacramental signs of the New Law are in some manner the cause of grace. If, therefore, exterior penance is a sacramental sign, it will be a cause of grace; and thus grace will be from our acts, which is the Pelagian heresy."

Secondly, from his solution to the second little question, in which he explicitly proposes this twofold consideration, saying:

"The reality of any sacrament is proportionate to its sacrament, of which it is called the reality. Now exterior penance, which in Penance is the sacrament only, is a sacrament as a sign only on the part of the act of the penitent; but it is at once a sign and a cause if the act of the penitent is joined to the act of the minister; and therefore interior penance is the reality of exterior penance, but as signified only through the acts of the penitent; whereas it is signified and caused through those same acts when the absolution of the minister is joined to them, through which a man is in some manner disposed to grace; just as also in the sacrament of the Eucharist the true Body of Christ is a reality signified only by the species of bread and wine, but caused by the words of the minister; and those two things, joined together, are the sign and the cause."

On the Second Assertion of This Conclusion

The second assertion of this conclusion, namely, that the acts of the penitent stand as the matter, whereas absolution stands as the form of the sacrament, readily follows both from the general nature of a sacrament of the New Law and from the specific character of this sacrament.

For, as was established in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General* (article 4), every sacrament of the New Law consists of two elements, one of which has the place of matter, or of what is determined within the class of signs, while the other has the place of form, or of what determines the former within that same class.

Moreover, from the very twofold character of this rite, as remissive and judicial, there follows both the existence of the two elements, matter and form, and the attribution of each to its proper part.

First, Penance is not simply a certain penitential rite (for if it were such, the acts of the penitent would certainly be its principal and formal element, indeed its only element), but a *rite remitting sins*, and precisely for a penitent man. Remission, however, does not come from the proper power of the acts of the subject, since these do not suffice for justification, but from an extrinsic agent—that is, in the present case, from God through the action of the minister who absolves. Hence in this very absolution there resides primarily and formally the sacramental signification and power, and consequently the character of form.

On the other hand, the acts of the subject, which are necessarily required for this remission, inasmuch as it is not simply remissive but penitential, also have their own signification and power in relation to remission; for without them absolution would not have its own power and signification, since it consists in the absolution of the penitent. Nevertheless the acts of the penitent have the place not of form but of matter, since they do not stand on the side of the agent effecting remission but

receive it on the side of the one undergoing it; nor do they signify and cause remission otherwise than as determined by absolution. Therefore absolution and the acts of the penitent concur in one single rite, remissive and penitential, so that from absolution it has that by which it is remissive, and from the acts of the penitent that by which it is penitential.

Secondly, Penance is a *judicial rite*; but in every judgment the sentence of the judge has the place of form, whereas the acts of the accuser and of the witnesses have the place of matter. For it is the sentence itself which completes, determines, and resolves the whole case. Hence, in the sacramental judgment, the sentence of absolution has the place of form, whereas the acts of the penitent—namely contrition (accusation), confession (testimony), and the purpose of making satisfaction—have the place of matter determined by absolution.

Conclusion III. All and only the aforesaid acts of the penitent and of absolution belong to the essence of the sacrament; wherefore, in particular, the purpose of making satisfaction, sensible contrition, and absolution are of the essence of the sacrament; but satisfaction actually performed and the imposition of hands neither belong to its essence nor are required for its validity and existence.

Proof.

This conclusion, which is laid down against certain secondary opinions of theologians recounted above (pp. 171 ff.), was equivalently proved in both its parts ("all" and "only") in the preceding Conclusion; for it is deduced from and contained in almost all the arguments there adduced.

Furthermore, as was said above (pp. 171 ff.), the *first two opinions* appear to labour under a mere equivocation, although the manner of speaking employed by Biel, Durandus, and Cano must simply be avoided, as being contrary to the documents of the Church, and the manner of speaking employed by Soto should not be adopted without at least some explanation.

The *latter two opinions*, however, concerning the necessity of satisfaction actually performed and of the imposition of hands, which wander further from the truth, are more suitably discussed below (articles 53, 70, and 82).

Likewise, the manner in which contrition and satisfaction enter into the essence of the sacrament—that is, as regards the sensible character of contrition and the purpose of making satisfaction—will be treated in its proper place, where these acts are considered individually (chapter IV, article 26, and chapter VI, article 70).

REPLY

Besides the difficulties already reported, concerning the texts of the Councils of Florence and Trent and of St. Thomas—which required an immediate solution in the very proof of the Conclusion—the opponents are accustomed to raise the following objections, drawn chiefly from the very nature of the sacrament:

Objection 1 (Against Conclusions I and II).

According to present-day practice, a dying person deprived of the use of his senses may lawfully be absolved conditionally, even when no sign of repentance can be detected in him either previously or at present. But this would not be lawful if the external acts of the penitent belonged to the essence of

the sacrament (as the Scotists hold) or were required for its validity (as Ballerini holds); otherwise there would be an attempt to administer an invalid sacrament. Therefore the external acts of the penitent are not of the essence of the sacrament, nor are they required for its validity.

Reply. The minor premise is denied. For the lawfulness of such a practice, which is fairly recent (and will be treated more fully in its proper place), can be based—and according to the supporters of our position is based—both upon the presumption (or a prudently judged probability, however slight) that such external acts actually have been or are present, even though they are unknown or cannot be detected, and upon the principle that in extreme circumstances it is lawful to attempt extreme measures.

If the objection were valid, it could be turned back against the objectors themselves, especially the Scotists. For, according to them, external acts are conditions required for the existence or validity of the sacrament; hence they too would not be permitted to absolve a dying person apparently devoid of such external signs, or else the Scotists equally have the burden of explaining the ground of that lawfulness, which can be nothing other than a presumption of the existence of the aforesaid acts. Likewise, according to Ballerini, as according to all theologians, the internal act of attrition is a condition necessarily required for the validity of the sacrament; hence, likewise, it would not be lawful to absolve a dying person who exhibits no signs of the use of reason, without which attrition cannot exist; nor can any ground for the lawfulness of such absolution be assigned except a presumption that he has the use of reason.

Hence the instability of Ballerini's position becomes apparent, for he based his opinion almost exclusively upon this case of the absolution of a dying person. The practice in question is fairly recent; moreover, the question concerns solely its lawfulness—which the older theologians, even after the Council of Trent, more commonly denied—and not the certain validity of the sacrament, as is evident from the very fact that it is administered conditionally.

Galtier aptly observes on this matter:

"It is arbitrary ... and illogical to derive the entire doctrine concerning the constitutive elements of the sacrament from so uncertain a fact.

"Nor should it be said: If the sacrament is then present—as seems possible from the aforesaid practice—the interpretations by which other opinions explain it are no less arbitrary. For the disparity is very great.

"Those interpretations, in fact, (a) arise from a firmly established doctrine concerning the constitutive elements of the sacrament, and rest upon an evident psychological fact, namely, that a man who has preserved the Catholic faith preserves by that very fact the will, at least at the moment of death, to do what lies within him to be delivered from sin; (b) they concern only accidental occurrences, in which the mind of Christ may rightly be presumed to have been that such matter should suffice as is possible in the circumstances.

"The aforesaid opinion, on the contrary, from that doubtful case alone deduces and gathers a general doctrine concerning those things which are in themselves constitutive, and considers the doctrine established by the Council of Trent to be interpreted in an altogether arbitrary manner: for what the Council says must be present in order to constitute the sacrament, so that it cannot exist without it,

is in that opinion admitted to be simply absent; and what the Council calls, in some true sense, the matter of the sacrament is in that opinion admitted to be merely an internal disposition of the receiving subject."[112]

[112] Galtier, De Paenitentia, thesis 23, no. 377 (Paris, 1931), p. 282 ff.

Objection 2 (Against Conclusion II, with the Scotists).

A sacrament is essentially a sign of grace. But absolution alone signifies the effect of this sacrament, namely, the remission of sins. Therefore the essence of this sacrament consists in absolution alone.

Reply.

I deny the minor premise, or distinguish it: That absolution alone signifies the remission of sins in every respect, I deny; that it does so with respect to the active infusion of grace, or the cause of the remission of sins, I distinguish further: that absolution by itself signifies this infusion in any way whatsoever and in abstraction, I concede; that it signifies the concrete mode and manner in which the remission takes place in this sacrament, whether as a judgment or as a conciliatory and penitential judgment, I deny.

First of all, although absolution possesses the principal and more expressive likeness to the remission of sins, insofar as that remission is considered in its cause, which is the infusion of grace, nevertheless the acts of the penitent also have a certain likeness to the same effect, according to the various aspects which may be considered in it, or, if one prefers, according to certain elements intimately connected with it: namely, the preparation for grace through the movement of the free will with respect to sin, signified by contrition; the movement of the free will toward God, signified by confession; and the healing of the remnants of sin, signified by satisfaction.

St. Thomas, replying to a similar objection in *In IV Sent.*, distinction 22, question 2, article 1, question 3, reply to objection 2, says:

"The remission of sins bears a certain likeness to the things done in Penance: for the infusion of grace, which causes the remission of sin, is signified by the absolution of the priest; the preparation for grace, as regards the movement of the free will with respect to sin, by contrition; but, as regards the movement of the free will toward God, by confession, through which one commits oneself to God to be healed; while the healing of the remnants of sin is both signified and effected by satisfaction."

Moreover, the proper signification of absolution itself, with respect to the infusion of grace, is of itself indeterminate; and it receives its concrete determination, which is proper to this sacrament, from the acts of the penitent and from no other source. For the words of the priest, "I absolve you," taken by themselves, signify merely remission or release from sin. But the remission which takes place in this sacrament is not a simple remission and release; rather, it is both judicial and conciliatory and penitential. The priest's words do not possess this judicial signification, and especially this conciliatory and penitential signification, independently of the acts of the penitent, by which the judicial proceeding is intrinsically completed and from which the conciliatory and especially penitential character of this judgment arises.

From this it is evident that in this sacrament, no less than in the others, signification resides both in its form and in its matter; indeed, formally speaking, it resides neither in the form nor in the matter taken separately, but in both as one, or in the composite, conjointly and indivisibly, although its parts

contribute to this composite signification in different ways: the one, namely the form, as determining; the other, namely the matter, as determined, within the same order of signification (cf. question 60, article 6, body and replies to objections 1 and 2).

Indeed, although, speaking formally and without qualification, sacramental signification is principally on the side of the form, or depends upon the form (cf. ibid., body and reply to objection 1), since form is the principle constituting a thing in a given species, nevertheless, in a certain respect and under a certain aspect, signification may be said to be principally on the side of the matter, or to reside in the matter, insofar as the form does nothing other than supervene to perfect and complete the signification of the matter (cf. ibid., reply to objection 2). In this sense St. Thomas does not hesitate to assert in *In IV Sent.*, distinction 22, question 2, article 2, question 2:

"In sacraments which have matter and form, signification is principally on the side of the matter, but efficacy is on the side of the form; and therefore, since the acts of the penitent in this sacrament are as matter, and the absolution of the priest as form, this sacrament, with respect to the character of signifying, consists principally in the act of the penitent; but with respect to efficacy, in the absolution of the priest."

Objection 3.

A sacrament is essentially productive of grace. But absolution alone, and in no way the acts of the penitent, causes the effect of this sacrament, or the remission of sins. Therefore the essence of this sacrament consists in absolution alone.

Reply.

Certain theologians,[113] conceding the minor premise, deny the consequence, because, they say, although the sacrament considered as a whole causes grace, it is nevertheless not necessary that it should cause grace according to all its parts. Hence the acts of the penitent may be parts of the essence of the sacrament, although its causality is exercised through the form alone. In this sense, as we said above (p. 189), Ferrariensis interprets the teaching of St. Thomas, while Cajetan explains the text of the Holy Doctor in his *Commentary on the Sentences*.

[113] Cf. Suárez, Disp. 18, sect. 2.

But this opinion is explicitly contrary to the teaching of the Holy Doctor (at least as it is contained in the *Summa Theologiae*, as we said there), and in no way accords with the general doctrine concerning a sacrament set forth in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General*. For since a sacrament is a being which is one in itself, and its whole character consists in signifying and causing together—indeed, indivisibly signifying by causing and causing by signifying—whatever concurs in constituting the sacrament must concur both significatively and causally, so that every intrinsic part of the sacrament participates in some manner in both characters.

Hence we deny the minor premise of the argument and affirm, with St. Thomas (question 86, article 6, cited on pp. 187 ff.), that both absolution and the acts of the penitent concur efficiently in the remission of sins, although absolution does so principally, while the latter do so secondarily and in subordination to it.

Strictly and formally speaking, the causal influence belongs neither to form nor to matter taken separately, but to the sacrament itself conjointly and indivisibly (against Lugo, who posits a twofold

partial signification and causality, attributing one to matter and the other to form). By reason of the sacrament itself, this influence consequently belongs to its parts, namely matter and form, and indeed in the mode in which they are parts, and therefore principally to the form. For matter has the character of potency, while form has the character of act; hence it is principally from the form that the composite has the character of being actual and consequently operative, since operation pertains to actuality. And this is what St. Thomas says in the text cited at the end of the preceding objection.

Further instance.

If the acts of the penitent concurred actively in the effect of the sacrament, it would follow:

1. That the penitent would justify himself and remit his own sins to himself, which contradicts both the principle of the distinction between cause and effect and the nature of the other sacraments;

2. That the penitent would absolve himself, which is contrary to the judicial nature of this sacrament, from which follows the distinction between the one who judges and the one who is judged;

3. That the penitent would be partly the minister of this sacrament, which is contrary both to the nature of the other sacraments and to the doctrine of the Church concerning the distinction between minister and subject, as well as to the words of Christ conferring the power of remission upon priests alone.

Reply.

Once it is admitted that the acts of the penitent have the aforementioned character of concurring only in the manner of the matter of the sacrament, none of the alleged difficulties follows. For:

1. It does not follow that the penitent can be said, simply and properly, to *justify himself* or *remit sins to himself*, because he does not perform the very justifying action which is proper to the sacrament; rather, he concurs only by placing the acts which partially and secondarily constitute the proper cause from which that action follows, namely the sacrament. The acts of the penitent themselves, once the sacrament has been constituted, do indeed concur in the action of remitting sins, yet not insofar as they are acts of the penitent, but insofar as they are elements of the sacrament, and therefore with the sacrament and in the sacrament; and this precisely as its matter, therefore as affected by its form, and by reason of that form formally, as it is the actual form of the sacrament.

From this it is also evident that this sacrament (as also Matrimony) does not contradict the nature of the other sacraments, but differs from them only as regards the matter from which the sacrament is constituted. For this sacrament, once constituted (it matters little whether it is constituted from some extrinsic sensible matter or from the acts of the subject himself), exercises its proper influence upon the subject in whom it is received, so that the water in Baptism concurs efficiently no less than the acts of the penitent in Penance.

Furthermore, even in the other sacraments, which consist in sensible matter, the subject himself concurs in his own manner in the efficacy of the sacrament, since the proximate matter, which enters

directly and proximately into the constitution of the sacrament, is the very use of the matter, for example the washing with water, which is active in the minister but passive in the subject himself. Indeed, in the sacrament of Order, if its matter were said formerly to have been the handing over of the instruments, the subject would have concurred more intimately in the constitution of the sacrament and consequently in its causality, insofar as, for validity, the touching of the instruments by the ordinand, or his positive act of touching the instruments, would have been necessary.

2. Still less does it follow that the penitent *absolves himself*, since this word expresses the efficacy of the sacrament not in just any manner, but insofar as it belongs to the form and to the minister, especially if "absolution" is understood in the sense of a judicial sentence. It may nevertheless be said that the penitent—or rather the acts of the penitent—concurs in his being absolved, insofar as he concurs in constituting the sacrament whose form is absolution and through whose influence the minister absolves.

3. In no sense does it follow that the penitent is even partly the *minister* of the sacrament, because the minister is not the one who supplies the matter alone in whatever fashion, but the one who applies the sacrament, and indeed as a human instrument acting under the influence of Christ through it. This is done by the priest alone, insofar as he places the form itself, which is the dominating and determining principle, and thereby joins form to matter, and thereby makes the acts of the penitent formally the matter of the sacrament, and thereby constitutes the sacrament; and in this sense he places the entire sacrament; finally, he himself is taken up by God together with the sacrament for the causing of grace.

Nor does it matter that in the other sacraments (with the exception, in one respect, of Matrimony and, in a certain sense, Order under the aforementioned hypothesis) the minister also supplies the matter, since this is accidental to the nature of the minister as such and serves only to manifest the excellence of the grace which is given in those sacraments beyond all faculty of human action, and the excellence of the power of Christ which operates in all the sacraments (question 84, article 1, replies to objections 1 and 2, cited on pp. 182 ff.).

Moreover, as St. Thomas observes (ibid., reply to objection 1), even in bodily healing some remedies administered are things external, supplied by the physician himself, while others are exercises and acts of the persons being healed, perhaps prescribed by the physician; nevertheless the sick person himself is in no way said to be the physician of his own illness, or simply the cause of his own cure, although he contributes to being healed by the physician.

Further objection.

In natural things, not only he who supplies the form alone is truly called the cause of a composite—as fire is said to generate fire—but also he who supplies the matter alone—as a man is said to beget a man. Hence, if the acts of the penitent were matter composing the sacrament, the penitent himself would also truly be called the cause or minister of the sacrament.

Reply.

As is clear from the very examples adduced, in order that one who supplies one part may be called the cause of the composite, it does not suffice that he furnish that part (otherwise the person who

produced the ink which I use in writing this book would be the cause of my book); rather, it is required that he join one part to the other, or be in some way the reason why the two parts come together. Hence the comparison with the acts of the penitent is denied, since the penitent does indeed supply the matter, but does not join the form to it, nor is he the reason why both concur together, in the way in which the priest, who has been given the power to determine the matter by his words and to raise it to sacramental status, does so.

Objection 4.

This sacrament consists essentially in a judgment, as is clear from chapter 4 of the Council of Trent. But a judgment essentially comprises the sentence alone, which in the present case is absolution; the remaining things are connected with it only as prerequisites, so that the sentence may be pronounced. Therefore absolution alone pertains to the essence of the sacrament.

Reply.

I deny the major premise, if "judgment" is understood, as the objector takes it, to mean only the judicial sentence, and not—as it should also be understood—the entire judicial proceeding. As was said above in Conclusion II (pp. 178 ff.), according to Tradition and notably according to the Fourth Lateran Council and Trent, this sacrament is a tribunal or judicial proceeding, to whose essence the acts of the accuser and witnesses also belong. Chapter 4 of Trent, however, is invoked ineptly, for there it is a question only of absolution, which is said to take place "after the manner of a judicial act, whereby sentence is pronounced by [the priest] as by a judge."

Objection 5.

A sacramental action is the action of the minister and the action of Christ; but the acts of the penitent are not actions of the minister or of Christ; therefore they are not sacramental actions and consequently do not pertain to the essence of the sacrament.

Reply.

The words "sacramental action" conceal an equivocation. Of the action which is sacramental formally as an action—such as the application and administration of the sacrament itself, or its constitution through the joining of matter and form, or the very utterance or placing of the form, or the very causal influence of the sacrament—it is conceded that it is the action of Christ and of the minister. But this is denied of an action which is sacramental only materially, that is, insofar as it is a certain entity or element of the sacrament (whether it happens to be an action or not), such as the acts of the penitent are. Otherwise even the action or movement of water flowing in baptismal washing would have to be called the action of Christ and of the minister.

Objection 6.

The sacrament is placed by the minister; therefore the acts of the penitent do not pertain to the essence of the sacrament.

Reply.

The word "placed" contains another equivocation (frequent among our opponents), which has already been sufficiently explained from what was said above (pp. 195 ff.). The minister, namely, is the cause of the whole sacrament, and in this sense he places the whole sacrament, since, by directly

placing the form alone, he is the reason why the matter is thereby determined to sacramental being. In this sense you would not improperly say that the minister places the very matter of Penance, most formally as such, since it is not so placed by the penitent.

Objection 7.

The matter of a sacrament must be something sensible and must coexist with the form. But contrition and the purpose of satisfaction are not something sensible; and confession and satisfaction do not necessarily coexist with absolution, since the former can precede it by a long time, and the latter can follow it.

Reply.

The matter of a sacrament need not be something sensible in every respect; it suffices that it be sensible in some way and that, in this respect, it enter into the constitution of the sacrament, as happens with contrition and the purpose of satisfaction. As was said in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General* (article 4, p. 107), in the sacraments a moral simultaneity between the parts suffices, greater or lesser according to the nature of each sacrament. Hence, in view of the judicial nature of Penance, confession may precede absolution by a long time, just as the declaration of witnesses may precede the sentence of the judge. Satisfaction performed, however, does not pertain to the essence of the sacrament, but rather stands as the execution of the punitive sentence; hence it may follow absolution.

Article 5. Whether the acts of the penitent are integral parts of the matter of Penance, and thus whether this sacrament has parts properly speaking

ARTICLE V. Whether the Acts of the Penitent Are Integral Parts of the Matter of Penance, and Whether It Is Proper to This Sacrament to Have Parts (q. 90; cf. In IV Sent., dist. 16, q. 1, a. 1). ***STATE OF THE QUESTION***

In the preceding article we considered those things which pertain to the very physical essence of this sacrament, namely, the matter and form, which are called essential parts. We now inquire concerning those things which pertain directly only to its integrity, namely the quantitative integral parts, which are understood on the side of the matter. For, since we have established that the matter of this sacrament resides in the three acts of the penitent taken together, the question is how those three acts, considered separately, concur to contain, divide, and compose the matter of the sacrament: whether, that is, as subjective parts, or as potential parts, or as integral parts.

In the documents of the Church, moreover, unlike those relating to other sacraments, the character of parts is attributed especially to this sacrament. The Council of Florence says that "the acts of the penitent are distinguished into three parts" (Denz. 699). The Council of Trent teaches still more expressly that the acts of the penitent "are called parts of Penance insofar as they are required for the integrity of the sacrament" (chapter 3; cf. canon 4; Catechism of the Council of Trent, part 2, chapter 5, question 13). St. Thomas devotes a special question to this matter (question 90), entitled "On the Parts of Penance ... in General."

For an understanding of this question, something must be premised from philosophy concerning the nature of parts and whole, which are correlative to each other.[114]

[114] Cf. St. Thomas, here, articles 1, 2, 3; In IV Sent., dist. 16, q. 1, a. 1, q. 3; I, q. 76, a. 8; In Met., book V, lect. 21 (Cathala ed., nos. 1089, 1093 ff.); book VII, lect. 10 (ibid., no. 1486 ff.); lect. 12 (ibid., no. 1546); Cajetan, In I, q. 76, a. 8; John of St. Thomas, Ars Logica, chapter IV, De divisione (Reiser ed., p. 21 ff.); Gredt, Renner, Monaco, in their Logic, on Division.

As St. Thomas rightly observes in article 1, "parts of a thing are those into which the whole is materially divided; for parts are related to the whole as matter to form; hence in Book II of the *Physics* [text 31] parts are placed in the genus of material cause, and the whole in the genus of formal cause. Wherever, therefore, there is found some plurality on the side of matter, there is found a notion of parts."

A whole is distinguished in two ways: into an integral and a potestative whole; or in three ways: into integral, potential, and universal; or in four ways: into essential, quantitative, potential, and universal. These four members may be arranged logically as follows:

Integral whole (integral parts) Essential whole (essential parts) Quantitative whole (quantitative parts, or integral parts strictly so called)

Potestative whole (potestative parts) Potential whole (potential parts) Universal whole (subjective parts)

This division is derived from the different manner in which a whole and its parts are related to each other. In an *integral whole*, the perfection of the thing is considered, and the parts are regarded as constituting or integrating it. Since, however, one perfection of a thing is essential and another quantitative, there are two kinds of integral whole and of its parts: namely, the *essential whole*, whose essential parts are matter and form (both in the physical order and in the metaphysical order, where genus and difference stand as matter and form); and the *quantitative whole*, whose quantitative parts (integral parts strictly so called) are again of two kinds. Some are such that the essence itself cannot be preserved without them (integral parts in a certain sense essential), as the head and heart in the human body. Others belong to the accidental completion of a thing, without which its essence can subsist (parts merely integral, or integral in the strictest sense), as feet and hands in the human body.

In a *potestative whole*, by contrast, the power of the thing is considered, and the parts are viewed as subject to the power of the whole. Since this power and subjection are themselves twofold—one in the real order of efficacy and operation, the other in the logical order of predication and attribution—there are also two kinds of potestative whole and of its parts: namely, the *potential whole*, whose potential parts are the various modes of influencing and operating, as the vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual powers, or the cognitive and appetitive powers, are parts of the human soul, and the judicial, advisory, and commanding functions are parts of prudence; and the *universal whole* (which by some is also called potential in a logical sense), which is nothing other than a genus in relation to its species and specific differences, called subjective parts, because they divide and in some way compose the genus insofar as it is predicated of them and is subjected to and contained in them, as animal is contained in man and brute, in rational and irrational.

Concerning this mode of containment and predication, observe with St. Thomas (article 3) that a *universal whole* is perfectly contained in each of its parts with respect to its essence and power, and can therefore be predicated of each simply, as animal is predicated of man and brute. But a *potential whole* is contained in each of its parts perfectly with respect to essence, but not perfectly with respect to

power, and therefore can be predicated of each only in some qualified respect: thus, because the vegetative principle in man is the rational soul, it may be said that the vegetative principle in man is the rational soul. An *integral whole*, however, whether essential or quantitative, is not perfectly contained in each of its parts either as to essence or as to power, and therefore cannot of itself be predicated of any of them; as though one were to say that matter is man, or that animal is man, or that the head is the human body.

Against certain ancient authors, referred to without being named by St. Thomas, who taught that the acts of the penitent were subjective or potential parts of this sacrament, theologians commonly teach with the Angelic Doctor that they are only integral parts, in the manner shortly to be explained.

CONCLUSION

The acts of the penitent are not subjective or potential parts of the sacrament, but integral parts; and indeed they are not essential but quantitative parts, yet in such a way that they integrate the very matter of the sacrament. This is fitting to no other sacrament, and for this reason the sacrament of Penance alone is said to have parts. It is proved in parts.

PART I. The acts of the penitent are not subjective parts of the sacrament, as though they were three species of the same sacrament of Penance (article 3).

For it is of the nature of subjective parts that the whole essence and power of the whole be preserved in each part, simultaneously and equally, just as the whole essence and power of animal, insofar as it is animal, is preserved in man and in brute, which simultaneously and equally divide animal. But this does not hold for the several acts of the penitent: for in them the form of the sacrament, which is the distinct act of absolution, is not preserved; nor, indeed, is the whole matter of the sacrament, which, as was said in the two preceding articles, is constituted from the three acts of contrition, confession, and satisfaction. These acts are not equal, but of diverse kinds; nor are they simultaneous, but successive, at least in the order of nature.

PART II. The acts of the penitent are not potential parts of the sacrament, as though they were three activities of its form (article 3).

For it belongs to the nature of potential parts that the whole essence of the whole be present in each, just as the whole essence of the soul is present in each of its powers and faculties, such as the cognitive and appetitive, the intellect and the will; and that to each there belong a special and distinct manner of influencing and operating, as is evident in the cognitive and appetitive powers. But neither the first nor the second condition applies to the several acts of the penitent. The first does not apply for the reason already stated; nor does the second, because they do not influence justification distinctly and unequally, as though contrition acted in one manner, confession in another, and satisfaction in yet another; rather, they concur equally and in one manner, insofar as from them results that one thing which is necessarily required for the penitential judgment.

PART III. The acts of the penitent are integral parts (article 3).

Since the acts of the penitent are true parts of the sacrament, as was proved in the preceding article, and since there are three kinds of parts—subjective, potential, and integral—when the first two kinds have been excluded, "it remains that the aforesaid three [contrition, confession, and satisfaction] are

integral parts of Penance; and the notion of these requires that the whole not be present in each part, either according to the whole of its power, or according to its whole essence, but in all together."

The matter is moreover manifest from a consideration of the sacramental character of the acts of the penitent; for all of them concur in constituting or completing the sacrament, and indeed simultaneously and equally, if one considers the simultaneity of relation and the equality of proportion.

PART IV. The acts of the penitent are not essential but quantitative parts, which nevertheless integrate the matter of the sacrament (article 2).

The acts of the penitent can be considered in two ways: either collectively and in comparison with the form or with the whole sacrament, and thus they are essential parts (or, rather, an essential part), since in this way they do not differ from the very matter of the sacrament which is constituted from them; or individually and in comparison with their fellow parts and with the matter of the sacrament which is composed of them, and thus they are not essential parts, but have the character of quantitative parts.

For in a natural composite there are only two kinds of constituent parts: namely, essential parts, which are matter and form, and quantitative parts, since no diversity of parts in matter can arise except by reason of quantity. Hence, in the sacramental composite, which analogically imitates a natural composite after the manner of an artificial thing, the acts of the penitent, standing on the side of matter, have, by analogy, the character of quantitative parts.

St. Thomas says to this effect:

"Part is twofold, as is said in Book VII of the Metaphysics [text 33 ff.], namely, a part of essence and a part of quantity. Parts of essence are naturally form and matter, but logically genus and difference. In this manner every sacrament is distinguished into matter and form, as into parts of essence. Hence it was said above (question 60, articles 5 and 6) that the sacraments consist of things and words. But since quantity belongs on the side of matter, the parts of quantity are parts of matter. And in this way parts are especially assigned to the sacrament of Penance ... as regards the acts of the penitent, which are the matter of this sacrament."

Now, since in a natural composite quantitative parts are of two kinds—some without which the very essence of the thing cannot be preserved, such as the head and heart in the human body, and others without which its essence subsists, such as hands and feet—the acts of the penitent belong to the first kind, inasmuch as they integrate the very essence or matter of the sacrament. There is, however, an exception for satisfaction in its actual performance, since, as will be shown in article 70, this is not required for integrating the essence of the sacrament, but for completing its perfection.

Considering this sacrament adequately, we find four kinds of composition, totality, and parts. The first three are found in all sacraments, whereas the last belongs to Penance alone.

First, there is a metaphysical composition from the notion of sign (matter) and the notion of what is signified (form), in which there are an essential whole and essential parts. Secondly, there is a physical composition from the relation of sign (form) and its foundation (matter), in which likewise there are a whole and essential parts. Thirdly, within the aforesaid foundation there is found a composition from absolution (form) and the acts of the penitent (matter), in which again there are a

whole and essential parts. Fourthly, in the aforesaid matter, which consists of the acts of the penitent, there is a composition from the threefold act, in which an integral whole and integral parts are contained, concurring simultaneously and equally in the composition.

Since, moreover, a sacrament, like every artificial thing, presupposes matter,[115] and since here the matter is simply the acts of the penitent, when Penance is said to have parts, this must be understood simply of the integral parts of this matter, or of the very acts of the penitent. And because it happens only in Penance that the matter has such parts, as will presently be shown, it is for this reason that only this sacrament is said, without qualification, to have parts.

[115] Cf. preceding article, p. 172; treatise On the Sacraments in General, pp. 54, 91, 109 ff., 415.

PART V. The sacrament of Penance alone has quantitative parts of this kind, and therefore to it alone "parts are especially assigned" (article 2), and of it alone is it said without qualification that it has parts.

The reason is that only in Penance and Matrimony (in which latter, however, there is no plurality of parts) does the matter consist, not in some external thing or its use, but in the human acts of the subjects themselves, in which alone some formal or sacramental diversity of parts can be found. St. Thomas says to this effect:

"In the other ... sacraments the matter is not human acts, but some one external thing, either simple, such as water or oil, or composite, such as chrism. And therefore parts are not assigned to the other sacraments" (articles 1 and 2).

This is confirmed by the common manner of speaking of councils and theologians, who are accustomed to inquire about the parts of the sacrament of Penance, but not of the other sacraments; which is a sign that to this sacrament alone it belongs peculiarly and simply to have parts.

Suárez objects to the foregoing reason and to the words of the Holy Doctor that in the other sacraments also, namely those which consist in a use (the Eucharist excepted), there are human acts which are their proximate matter, and from which a multiplicity of parts can be taken, as is evident in the several anointings employed in Extreme Unction. Moreover, in Matrimony itself, which consists in an act of the subject, there is a twofold act, or a twofold partial handing-over. Hence it is not simply and universally true that parts cannot be assigned in other sacraments besides Penance; indeed, this is verified in Baptism alone.

Reply.

The objector considers only materially the notion of a sacrament in general and the peculiar character of Penance, and thus is prevented from understanding the profound reason for what the Angelic Doctor has most thoughtfully asserted here. For, since the formal notion of a sacrament consists in signifying, a sacramental plurality must formally be considered on the side of the matter wherever a plurality of things can be found in signifying; otherwise any plurality is irrelevant to the question and accidental. Now, from human acts alone can such a plurality arise in the matter of the sacraments, because in them alone can there be found a signification proper to themselves, which can be immediately raised to the sacramental order.

For an understanding of this, it must be observed first of all that, speaking without qualification, the matter of a sacrament (or the partial subject of sacramental signification) is that which is immediately joined to the form, namely, the proximate matter; and so it is the acts of the subject in

Penance and Matrimony, the species in the Eucharist, and the use of a sensible thing (not the sensible thing itself) in the other sacraments. Accordingly, only on the side of proximate matter is sacramental plurality to be taken in the matter of a sacrament, so that every plurality found in remote matter—for instance, in water, oil, bread, and chrism—is irrelevant and accidental.

Furthermore, the sacramental signification whereby proximate matter is referred to the effect of the sacrament does not belong to it in the same way in all the sacraments.

For in Penance and Matrimony signification belongs to the matter, or to the acts of the subject, as something proper to them by their very nature, because these sacraments "have an effect corresponding to human acts,"[116] insofar as God produces, for example, the sacramental grace of justification through the very penitential acts, by which man himself also concurs in justification outside the sacrament. Nor does it matter that the acts of the penitent are not formally sacramental matter, nor have formally sacramental signification, unless they are united to the form of absolution and to the sacramental order; for the form does not introduce the aforesaid signification into them, but finds it there, and merely vivifies, elevates, and formalizes it in the order of sacrament.

[116] Summa Theologiae, III, q. 84, a. 1; cf. In IV Sent., dist. 22, q. 2, a. 1, quaestiuncula 1, ad 2.

It follows that every plurality which is found in the aforesaid acts is by that very fact sacramental, and is a true and formal plurality of the parts of the sacrament's matter as such. This occurs in Penance alone, as is evident from the different nature and purpose of the acts of contrition, confession, and satisfaction. In Matrimony, on the contrary, there is formally one single bilateral or contractual act of handing-over, in which a plurality of two partial handings-over is indeed necessarily required, but it is something material and irrelevant to the present question, since we are treating of a single formal act and a single signification.

In the other sacraments, however, sacramental signification comes to the matter from without, because, as St. Thomas says, their matter, "insofar as it is given from without, represents something external acting toward sanctification ... [and not] the cooperation of the recipient";[117] and because the effect signified by these sacraments is not an effect corresponding to human acts, but a certain "excellent grace, which surpasses every faculty of human action ... [and] proceeds from the power of Christ, as from a certain extrinsic principle";[118] in other words, in these sacraments, unlike Penance and Matrimony, God does not choose a matter already ordered of itself in some other way to the obtaining of grace, and in some manner signifying it by its own power, but a matter in itself indifferent, into which such signification must be infused (although it may otherwise be remotely fitted to receive it).

[117] In IV Sent., dist. 22, q. 2, a. 1, quaestiuncula 1, ad 2.

[118] Summa Theologiae, III, q. 84, a. 1.

Now the power of an external agent, from which sacramental signification descends into the matter of these sacraments, is one and simple, as is evident from the unity of the end and of the single effect of each sacrament; and therefore it is compared with this matter as a simple principle from which sacramental signification descends into it in the manner of a simple effect. Hence in the matter of these sacraments no sacramental distinction or plurality of parts can be sought on any ground, and all plurality found in them is merely accidental and irrelevant: as, for instance, that in the Eucharist

there are two species (which, however, together make up one sign of the banquet), in Confirmation two actions of the imposition of the hand and anointing, and in Extreme Unction several anointings.

RESPONSE

Objection 1.

Every sacrament is something one and simple, as is clear from the unity of signification, of effect, and of the divine power operating in it. Therefore parts cannot be assigned to Penance.

Reply.

The unity and simplicity of a sacrament as sign and cause do not exclude multiplicity, even a multiplicity of diverse kinds, on the side of the foundation of the relation of sign and of the subject of causal power, since several things can concur in a certain order toward expressing the same signification or exercising the same power. This is particularly evident in instruments of divine power, which, though one and simple, can operate "by reason of its own greatness both through one thing and through many; and on this account parts can be assigned to a sacrament" (article 1, reply to objection 1).

Observe, nevertheless, that neither signification nor, especially, causality is in any manner multiplied, not even materially, by a plurality of the parts of the sacrament, as though diverse parts had partial significations and causalities from which there resulted one total and formally indivisible signification and causality (as some suppose). Rather, one signification and causality, indivisible in every respect, resides in all the parts, insofar as they are one foundation and one subject constituted from them. Nor is there any difficulty in the sacrament being a successive being, because, as was said in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General*, in the final terminative instant and in the final part of itself the sacrament, precisely like every successive being, exists, signifies, and causes by virtue of all the instants and parts which preceded.

Objection 2.

The acts of the penitent are not parts of the virtue of penance, since this is a certain habit or simple quality of the mind. Therefore neither are they parts of the sacrament, which is a simple sign and instrument.

Reply.

The parity is denied. For acts are related to a habit as effects, not as parts; but they can be related to the sacrament as parts of its matter. And therefore "parts are not assigned to penance insofar as it is a virtue," although parts are assigned to it insofar as it is a sacrament (article 1, reply to objection 2; cf. *In IV Sent.*, distinction 16, question 1, article 1, question 4).

Objection 3.

The matter of the sacrament of Penance is sin. But parts are not assigned to sin. Therefore neither are they assigned to Penance.

Reply.

Sin is only the remote matter of the sacrament, insofar as it is the object of the acts of the penitent, which are parts of its proximate matter (article 1, reply to objection 3).

Moreover, even to sin can be assigned both subjective and integral parts, although the division of the integral parts of the sacrament of Penance is not properly drawn from these. For the subjective parts of sin are sin of the heart (which is in the heart alone), sin of the mouth (which is in the heart and mouth), and sin of deed (which is in the heart, mouth, and work); for, since "good arises from an entire cause, but evil from any defect whatsoever," the nature of sin can consist even in a single defect, and accordingly sin of the heart is one complete species of sin, and likewise sin of the mouth and sin of deed are two other species. Furthermore, both in sin of the mouth and in sin of deed, parts which are as it were integral can be distinguished: namely, that which is in the heart, that which is in the mouth, and that which is in the deed (article 3, reply to objection 1; cf. Cajetan, on this article).

In a similar way the three acts of the penitent are distinguished: namely, the act of the heart (contrition), the act of the mouth (confession), and the act of deed (satisfaction); not, however, in such a way that these three acts correspond to the three aforesaid sins. Rather, concerning any one of these sins, the three acts of penance must be performed together, because they are not subjective parts of penance either, whose nature is preserved only in the three acts taken together. For, as St. Thomas observes, "more things are required for good, which proceeds from an entire cause, than for evil, which proceeds from individual defects," according to Dionysius (*Divine Names*, 4, 4). And therefore, although sin is perfected by the consent of the heart, nevertheless "for the perfection of penance there are required contrition of heart, confession of mouth, and satisfaction of deed" (article 2, reply to objection 4; cf. *In IV Sent.*, distinction 16, question 1, article 1, question 3, reply to objection 1).

Objection 4.

Sin is divided into sin of heart, mouth, and deed as into subjective parts. Therefore the sacrament of Penance also is divided into penance of heart, mouth, and deed (contrition, confession, and satisfaction) as into subjective parts.

Reply.

As was just said, the parity between sin and penance does not hold, except insofar as in each the element of heart, mouth, and deed is in some way an integrating part (article 3, reply to objection 1).

Objection 5.

An integral whole cannot be predicated of its own part in the way in which a universal whole can; for a foot cannot be called a man, as a man is called an animal. But Penance is rightly predicated of confession, since one says: "Confession is the sacrament of Penance." Therefore confession is at least not an integral but a subjective part of the sacrament of Penance.

Reply.

The major premise is true both formally and of itself, and also in fact of concrete substances. But in concrete accidental or artificial things, such as a sacrament is, it sometimes happens that a whole is predicated of a material part of itself, because, as was said in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General* (pp. 54, 91, 109 ff., 415), in simple predication the concrete accidental things are taken by supposition for their matter. Hence, just as it is rightly said, "Wood is a chair," and "Men are a society," so it is rightly said, "Confession is the sacrament"; and all the more so because by the name of confession one is accustomed to understand also contrition, by which confession is informed, and

the purpose of satisfaction, which is contained in contrition—in other words, the whole matter of the sacrament.

Objection 6.

No integral part contains within itself another part distinct from it. But the acts of the penitent contain one another, as is evident from contrition, which implies the purpose of confessing and making satisfaction, and from confession, which contains contrition. Therefore the acts of the penitent are not integral parts.

Reply.

One integral part can in some way contain another, indeed even the whole itself, but not simply and according to essence, in the manner of a subjective part. Thus the heart in a certain way contains the head virtually, insofar as, according to a common estimation, it is the principle of life by which the head also lives; and conversely the head contains the heart virtually insofar as it is the principle of sensation, which also resides in the heart. In like manner confession contains contrition as its effect and sign; and especially contrition virtually contains confession and satisfaction as their principle and foundation. In this sense contrition can be said virtually to contain the whole of penance.

St. Thomas says to this effect: "One integral part can contain the whole, although not according to essence; for the foundation in some way virtually contains the whole building, and in this way contrition contains virtually the whole of penance" (article 3, reply to objection 2).

Objection 7.

From integral parts a whole is constituted simultaneously and equally, as a line is constituted from its parts. But this does not happen in the acts of the penitent in relation to the sacrament. Therefore they are not integral parts of the sacrament.

Reply.

Some integral parts are homogeneous, such as parts of a line and, generally, parts of a nonliving body; others are heterogeneous, such as parts of a living body. But material equality and physical simultaneity are not required in all, as they are in the parts of a line; rather, in all of them there is, although in different ways, a simultaneity and equality of order, or a simultaneity of relation and equality of proportion.

St. Thomas says to this effect: "All integral parts have some order to one another; but some have only an order of position or relation, as the parts of an army; or they touch one another, as the parts of a heap; or they cling together, as the parts of a house; or they are continuous, as the parts of a line. But others have, beyond this, an order of power, as the parts of an animal, the first of whose powers is the heart, while certain others depend upon one another in an order of power. In a third manner they are ordered according to time, as the parts of time and motion. The parts of penance, therefore, have with one another an order of power and time, because they are acts; but not an order of place, because they have no position" (article 3, reply to objection 3).

Article 6. Whether sins are the remote matter of this sacrament

ARTICLE VI. Whether Sins Are the Remote Matter of This Sacrament (q. 84, a. 2; q. 90, a. 1, ad 3)

STATE OF THE QUESTION

We are treating of the REMOTE MATTER of this sacrament, concerning which two questions arise:

1. Whether sins are matter, and indeed remote matter.

2. Which sins are remote matter: whether, namely, all and only sins committed after Baptism.

The first question is the subject of this article; the other will be considered in the following articles, and indeed according to its threefold division: whether all sins committed after Baptism are the matter of this sacrament (Article VII); whether sins committed before Baptism are also its matter (Article VIII); and likewise whether sins accompanying Baptism are its matter (Article IX). Furthermore, the general question concerning the relation of sin to Penance will be completed later, where we treat of the object of the virtue of Penance (Article XIV) and of the effect of the sacrament, or the remission of both mortal and venial sins (Chapter VIII).

St. Thomas briefly but essentially resolves both questions in question 84, article 2, body and reply to objection 3, immediately after his discussion of the proximate matter (ibid., article 1). Moreover, in several other passages of both the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Commentary on the Sentences*, to be cited below, he completes and illustrates these same questions in passing.

As to the present question, about which there is no dispute among theologians, recall the two divisions of matter explained in the treatise *On the Sacraments in General* (Article IV, p. 88 ff.): namely, matter that is proximate and remote, and matter *out of which*, *about which*, and *in which*. These can be arranged in the following threefold order:

a. Proximate matter: that which is joined to the form in itself and immediately, and from which the sacrament immediately results; for example, washing. Remote matter: that which is not joined immediately to the form. Intrinsic matter, or matter *out of which*: that of which the sacrament is composed, although mediately; for example, the water which constitutes Baptism through washing. Extrinsic matter: that which does not constitute the sacrament, but is joined to it from without. Matter *in which*: that which is joined to the sacrament as the subject in which it is received. Matter *about which*: that which is joined to the sacrament as the object which it regards, and indeed in two ways:

Either as an object to be received (matter *ad quam*), as the right to another's body in Matrimony; Or as an object to be removed (matter *contra quam*), as the substance of bread and wine in the Eucharist, and sins in Penance.

b. Intrinsic matter, or matter *out of which*: proximate or remote. Extrinsic matter (necessarily remote, indeed more remote): matter *in which* or *about which*.

c. Matter *out of which*: proximate or remote. Matter *in which*. Matter *about which*.

Observe, however, that in the form of a sacrament there is not, properly and sacramentally speaking, a distinction between proximate form and remote form. "In form [indeed] ... there is no ground for

the same distinction; nor has it hitherto been devised by anyone, since form bears actuality and ultimate determination, which it includes of itself; whereas matter, of itself, implies potentiality and admits of a gradual indetermination, according as it approaches more nearly or more remotely to the actuality and ultimate completion of the form."[119]

[119] Salmanticenses, De Poenitentia, disp. 1, dub. 2, § 1, n. 58; Paris, 1883, p. 30.

CONCLUSION

Sins are the matter of this sacrament, not, however, proximate but remote matter, and not intrinsic matter *out of which*, but extrinsic matter *about which*.

Proof.

That is rightly called the matter of a sacrament which in some way concurs in constituting the sacrament on the side of its determinable and material element. Now three things concur in constituting the matter of Penance: namely, the acts of the penitent themselves, as that of which it is formally constituted (proximate matter *out of which*); the penitent himself, as their eliciting principle and subject (remote matter *in which*); and sins, as their object or, in a certain way, their extrinsic specifying principle. Therefore sins are rightly called the matter of this sacrament; indeed, St. Thomas (q. 84, a. 2, objections 1, 2, and 3) calls them its "proper matter."

They are not, however, proximate matter, but only remote matter, because what is joined proximately and immediately to the form is not sins but the acts of the penitent; in this sense St. Thomas elsewhere (q. 90, a. 1, ad 3) reserves the expression "proper matter" for the acts of the penitent alone. Yet, in another sense (which is not directly pertinent here), sins can be called the proximate and immediate matter of this sacrament, if matter is taken on the side of the effect, or as the matter upon which the sacrament acts, since it acts directly and immediately toward the destruction of sins.

Moreover, sins are not remote matter *out of which*, but only matter *about which*, because they do not enter, either partially or remotely, into the very constitution of the acts of the penitent. Rather, they are related to these acts only from without, as their specifying object, since those acts are directed toward the destruction of sins. Sins, indeed, are the object which these acts regard either as something to be destroyed or as something to be detested, just as wood is the object and matter of combustion and disease is the object and matter of medicine. For this reason certain theologians say that the sacrament of Penance does not have remote matter.

Hence the following manner of speaking employed by Lugo must not be approved:

"I reply that, speaking physically, one cannot deny that a past sin enters in some way, at least indirectly, into the constitution of this sacrament [namely, as denominating the form] ...; nor is it contrary to the mind of the Councils, which assign those three acts of the penitent as its matter; for these acts include sins indirectly. For when confession and sorrow for sins are assigned as matter, true sins are meant, since fictitious sins are not sins simply. Since, therefore, the matter is sorrow for true sins, that is, sins which truly existed, sorrow for true sins indirectly includes the sins themselves, by whose true past existence it is now denominated sorrow for true sins, and so forth. Consequently the past sins themselves are included in the matter assigned by the Councils; indeed, most frequently sins themselves are called the matter of this sacrament."

"They are nevertheless commonly called remote matter; because just as wood is called the remote matter of fire, for whose production wood is destroyed, so in the sacrament of Penance sins, whose destruction is intended through this sacrament, are called its remote matter, although their true past existence must enter indirectly into denominating the proximate matter in its character as such."[120]

[120] Lugo, Disputationes Scholasticae, t. 4, De Poenitentia, disp. 12, sect. 2, n. 23; Paris, 1892, pp. 686–687.

Article 7. Whether all sins committed after Baptism are the proper matter of the sacrament of Penance

ARTICLE VII. Whether All Sins Committed after Baptism Are Proper Matter for the Sacrament of Penance (q. 84, a. 2, ad 3; Suppl., q. 8, a. 5, ad 4; q. 18, a. 2, ad 4; In IV Sent., dist. 16, q. 1, a. 2, qq. 1, 2, and 3; dist. 17, q. 3, a. 3, q. 5, ad 4).[121]

STATE OF THE QUESTION

Although, in the order of nature, there is no intermediate state between sins committed before Baptism and sins committed after Baptism, nevertheless, in the order of time, three kinds of sins are appropriately distinguished by theologians in the present question, with reference, namely, to the last instant of time in which Baptism is completed and brought to perfection: those which precede that instant, those which occur at it, and those which are thereafter committed after it.

[121] Cf. Suárez, disp. 18, sect. 1; Lugo, disp. 13, sect. 3, n. 72 ff.; Salmanticenses, disp. 2, dub. 1, n. 37 ff.; Collet, De Poenitentia, part 2, chap. 3; De Augustinis, art. 6, near the beginning; Billot, thesis 5; Pesch, proposition 14; Diekamp, § 49, 3; Galtier, nn. 457–460.

The last of these, with which alone the present question is concerned, are distinguished into mortal and venial sins (for original sin necessarily precedes Baptism), and each of these classes into sins already remitted and sins not yet remitted, and into sins remitted through the sacrament, or confessed, and sins not yet confessed.

The question, therefore, is whether all these sins are the matter of this sacrament; more precisely, four things are asked:

1. Whether all postbaptismal sins, without distinction, are matter for Penance, although not in an equal manner and under an equal aspect.

2. Whether mortal sins not yet remitted are its principal and necessary matter.

3. Whether mortal sins already confessed are its less principal, non-necessary, but sufficient matter.

4. Whether venial sins, even if already remitted and confessed, are its secondary, non-necessary, but sufficient matter.

THE NEGATIVE POSITION

Peter of Osma (Pedro Martínez, named after his native town of Osma), a Salamancan doctor, denied that mortal sins are the necessary matter of this sacrament, as is evident from the following propositions condemned by Sixtus IV in the bull *Licet ea* of 9 August 1479:

"Mortal sins, as regards guilt and the punishment of the other world, are blotted out by contrition of heart alone, without reference to the keys."

"Evil thoughts need not be confessed, but are blotted out by displeasure alone, without reference to the keys." "Confession ought to be secret, that is, concerning secret sins, and not concerning manifest sins" (Denz. 724, 726, 727).

Among the Protestants, Luther particularly attacked the very fittingness of confessing all sins and the lawfulness of confessing venial sins. This is evident from the Council of Trent, session 14, chapter 5 and canon 7 (to be cited shortly), and more directly from the following two propositions of Luther, condemned by Leo X in the bull *Exsurge Domine* of 15 June 1520:

"In no way presume to confess venial sins, nor even all mortal sins, since it is impossible for you to know all your mortal sins. Hence in the primitive Church only manifest mortal sins were confessed."

"When we wish to confess all things purely, we do nothing other than wish to leave nothing to be forgiven by the mercy of God" (Denz. 748 ff.).

Francis of Osuna (died about 1540), O.F.M. of the Observance, commissary general of the Indies, taught in his *Spiritual Alphabet* that venial sins are not sufficient matter for this sacrament. The Salmanticenses report his opinion as follows:

"On the basis of this objection [namely, that the Council of Trent defined that venial sins may lawfully be confessed, but not that they alone suffice for the validity of the sacrament], we suspect that Francis of Osuna, in his second *Alphabet*, treatise 4, chapter 5, letter D, meant to assert that venial sins are not sufficient matter for this sacrament, and, consequently, that when only venial sins are confessed no grace is conferred *ex opere operato* by the sacrament; indeed, if he speaks consistently, he must assert that no sacrament at all is effected. His opinion in this matter, however, was ill received at the supreme tribunal, and, as heretical, it was ordered to be expunged by the Most Illustrious Don Antonio de Sotomayor in the expurgatory index of the year 1640."[122]

[122] Salmanticenses, De Poenitentia, disp. 2, dub. 1, § 4, n. 41; Paris, 1883, p. 115.

THE AFFIRMATIVE POSITION

Theological Note.

That mortal sins—all of them equally—are necessary matter for the sacrament is *de fide definita* by the Council of Trent (session 14, canon 7). That the same sins are its principal matter is *de fide* by equivalent definition in the same canon 7 (which sets the necessity of confessing mortal sins over against the lawfulness of confessing venial sins), and in the ordinary magisterium of the Church, both as explicitly taught and as implicitly contained in the ancient Church's practice, down to the fourth century, of confessing only mortal sins.

That sins already confessed (whether mortal or venial) are sufficient matter for the sacrament is theologically certain. This is evident from the practice of the faithful, approved explicitly and without restriction by the Council of Trent and Pius VI, and from the express teaching both of Benedict XI and of the Code of Canon Law.

That venial sins may lawfully be accused in confession is *de fide definita* from the aforesaid canon 7; that they can in some way be remitted through the sacrament is at least theologically certain (and appears proximate to the faith when canon 7 is considered together with chapter 5 of the same

session 14); that they are sufficient matter is theologically certain, as appears from the usage of the faithful approved by the Church and from the Code of Canon Law.

Documents of the Church.

Leo the Great (cited above, pp. 61 ff.) teaches that the sacrament of Penance was instituted for the lapsed, "who have violated the gifts of regeneration."

The Fourth Lateran Council, chapter 1, defines: "If anyone, after the reception of Baptism, has lapsed into sin, he can always be restored through true penance" (Denz. 430).

Benedict XI, in the constitution *Inter cunctas*, 17 February 1304: "Although ... there is no necessity to confess the same sins again, nevertheless, because of shame, which is a great part of penance, so that the confession of the same sins may be repeated, we deem it salutary, and strictly enjoin, that the Friars [Preachers and Minors] carefully admonish those who confess to them, and exhort them in their preaching, that they should confess to their own priests at least once a year, declaring that this pertains without doubt to the advancement of souls" (Denz. 470).

Sixtus IV condemned the above-mentioned propositions of Peter of Osma.

Leo X condemned the above-mentioned propositions of Luther.

THE COUNCIL OF TRENT, session 6, chapter 14 (cited above, p. 64): "For those who fall into sins after Baptism, Christ Jesus instituted the sacrament of Penance."

In the same session, canon 29, it defines that he "who has fallen after Baptism" cannot "recover lost justice without the sacrament of Penance."

Session 14, *On Penance*, chapter 1 (cited above, p. 65), teaches that this sacrament was instituted "for the remission of sins," inasmuch as a man can lose justice after Baptism, for applying the benefit of Christ's death "to those who have fallen after Baptism," "for reconciling the faithful who have lapsed after Baptism."

In the same session, chapter 2 (cited above, pp. 65 ff.), it teaches that "the Church exercises judgment over no one who has not first entered into it through the gate of Baptism"; that the faithful, having become such through Baptism, "if they have afterwards defiled themselves with any crime ... should stand before this tribunal as guilty persons [*as defendants*]"; and that "this sacrament of Penance is necessary for the salvation of those who have fallen after Baptism."

In the same session, chapter 5 (cited above, p. 66), it teaches "that the entire confession of sins ... is necessary by divine law for all those who have fallen after Baptism," and that this necessity is to be understood of "all mortal crimes ... into which the faithful of Christ have fallen." "For venial sins, by which we are not excluded from the grace of God and into which we fall more frequently, although they may rightly and profitably and without any presumption be declared in confession, as the practice of pious men shows, may nevertheless be omitted without fault and expiated by many other remedies" (Denz. 899).

In the same session, canon 1 (cited above, p. 52), it defines that the sacrament of Penance was instituted "for reconciling the faithful, whenever they fall into sins after Baptism."

In the same session, canon 7: "If anyone says that, in the sacrament of Penance, it is not necessary by divine law for the remission of sins to confess all and each of the mortal sins ...; or says that those who strive to confess all their sins wish to leave nothing to be forgiven by the divine mercy; or, finally, that it is not lawful to confess venial sins: let him be anathema" (Denz. 917; cf. *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, part 2, chapter 5, question 46).

Pius VI, in the bull *Auctorem fidei* of 28 August 1794, reports and condemns the teaching of the Synod of Pistoia as follows: "The declaration of the synod concerning the confession of venial sins, which it wishes should not be made too frequently, lest confessions of this kind be rendered contemptible—rash, pernicious, contrary to the practice of saints and pious persons approved by the holy Council of Trent" (Denz. 1539).

The Code of Canon Law, canon 901: "He who after Baptism has committed mortal sins, which have not yet been directly remitted by the keys of the Church, is bound to confess all those of which, after a diligent examination of his conscience, he is aware, and to explain in confession the circumstances which change the species of the sin." Canon 902: "Sins committed after Baptism, whether mortal sins already directly remitted by the power of the keys, or venial sins, are sufficient, but not necessary, matter for the sacrament of Penance."

CONCLUSION

Conclusion I. Sins committed after Baptism are matter for the sacrament of Penance, indeed all of them, but not under an equal aspect or with the same kind of necessity.

Proof.

That postbaptismal sins are matter for Penance follows from what was said in Article I concerning the remissive and judicial character of Penance and its distinction from Baptism.

That all postbaptismal sins are matter for Penance is evident because all possess the true character of sin, are remissible through the grace of this sacrament, belong to a baptized person subject to the Church, and are the object of a true judgment.

That not all are matter under an equal aspect or with the same kind of necessity is evident from the different nature of mortal and venial sins, which participate in the character of sin in different ways, and from the different relation which sins already confessed and those not yet confessed bear to the sacrament; consequently the manner in which the individual kinds stand as the matter of the sacrament varies.

For if we consider necessity on the part of the sacrament, or the condition required in order that its influence be exercised, all sins without distinction and in a confused or general sense are necessary and sufficient matter, insofar, namely, as some sin is required and any sin suffices, yet in such a way that mortal sins are principal matter, while venial sins are secondary matter. But if we consider necessity on the part of the subject and of sin, or the obligation of submitting sins to the sacrament, all and only mortal sins not yet confessed are necessary matter; mortal sins already confessed and any venial sins are free matter.

All these points are distinctly explained and proved in the following conclusions, in which three classes of sins are considered individually: mortal sins not yet remitted (and likewise those remitted but not yet confessed), mortal sins already confessed, and venial sins.

Conclusion II. Mortal sins not yet remitted are principal and necessary matter.

Proof.

Mortal sins are sins principally and simply so called; accordingly, they are principally regarded both by the acts of the penitent, as the matter of which one can and ought to repent, and consequently by the justifying influence of the sacrament, as matter which can and ought to be blotted out.

From this it also follows that these sins are matter which must necessarily be submitted to the sacrament; for since this sacrament is necessary for those who have fallen after Baptism, its necessity bears at least upon its principal matter.

From this absolute necessity of submitting mortal sins to the sacrament it follows, moreover, that if mortal sins are remitted through contrition before the reception of the sacrament, this remission takes place by the desire for the sacrament and with the continuing obligation subsequently to submit them to the sacrament itself. Therefore *sins remitted but not yet confessed* also belong to its principal and necessary matter. Nor is it a valid objection that the justifying influence of the sacrament cannot be exercised upon them, since they have already been remitted; for that influence has already been exercised upon those very sins beforehand, as it were, in contrition itself, which justifies by the desire for, or by virtue of, the sacrament, and it is exercised again in the sacrament subsequently received, as will be explained below concerning sins already confessed.

Conclusion III. Mortal sins already confessed are less principal matter, not necessary, yet sufficient.

Proof.

These sins are indeed principal matter in comparison with venial sins, because, although already remitted, they retain their mortal character and sorrow and penance can be exercised principally with respect to them. Nevertheless, in comparison with sins not yet confessed they have the character of *less principal* matter, because, since they no longer have their existence in the subject, the sacrament's influence cannot be exercised upon them strictly as blotting out, justifying, and giving life.

From this it also follows that they are *not necessary matter*.

They are nevertheless *sufficient matter*, because although they no longer exist in the subject in themselves, they formerly existed in such a manner and now also remain in their objective being as past sins, and also in some manner subjectively in their causes and effects. Consequently, as will be explained below (cf. the reply to "YOU WILL SAY"), the influence of the sacrament can be exercised upon them, especially insofar as it is medicinal and restorative, wherein lies the intimate character of the sacramental grace of Penance.

This is confirmed by their parity with sins already remitted through contrition before the sacrament, although by the desire for the sacrament. For the fact that these sins were remitted only by the desire for the sacrament, and with an obligation to defer them to the sacrament, introduces no formal disparity regarding their sufficiency as sacramental matter, since even in contrition the sacrament itself acted not as actually received but only as desired; nor does the sacrament itself afterwards merely discharge the aforesaid obligation, but is understood actually to remit those very sins.

The same truth, expressly contained in canon 902 of the Code of Canon Law, is deduced from the above-mentioned constitution of Benedict XI, in which confession of these sins is commended as salutary and conducive to the advancement of souls.

Nor is it a valid objection that the Supreme Pontiff commends only that sins already confessed should be accused together with other sins, and that he derives the whole usefulness of this accusation, not directly from the power of the sacrament, but indirectly from the shame by which sorrow for sins is aroused.

For the Supreme Pontiff teaches and commands that the faithful be exhorted to confession, because accusation even of sins already confessed is useful. The obvious meaning is that this accusation is fruitful even when the penitent has nothing else to accuse; consequently such sins are of themselves sufficient matter for the sacrament. Hence the Pontiff does not derive the fruit of this accusation from shame alone but from the sacrament itself. Besides, he manifestly speaks of sacramental confession, which is essentially ordered to absolution.

YOU WILL SAY.

From the nature of Penance, both judicial and sacramental, it seems to be excluded that it can be exercised over sins already confessed.

First, its judicial nature is an obstacle: both because, in general, judgment cannot be exercised twice concerning the same cause unless it is subject to revision (which does not occur in the present case), and because this sacramental judgment is exercised in either direction, that is, toward remitting or retaining sins; but sins already absolved, even if they are said to be capable of being remitted again, certainly cannot be retained, since they have been irrevocably remitted.

Secondly, its sacramental nature presents an obstacle, on account of a defect, first, on the part of the matter, namely sins that no longer exist and for which penance has already been performed; consequently also on the part of the form, which, without prejudice to the truth of its words, cannot be directed to absent matter, nor can it inform the same matter twice or be pronounced over it again (just as the words "This is my body," if pronounced with the intention of consecrating bread already consecrated, would be spoken falsely; so, too, "I absolve you from sins," pronounced over sins already absolved, is false); and especially on the part of the effect, which, since it is grace formally remissive of sin, cannot be infused where there is no remission to be effected.

REPLY.

If this objection were valid, it would likewise have to be urged against the validity of the confession of sins already remitted through contrition before the sacrament—a validity which is nevertheless certain—and, conversely, from that validity there follows a confirmation of our position.

The reasons advanced from the judicial nature [of Penance] are not valid.

For a valid judgment can be exercised twice upon the same object: first, if its purpose is not to reform the earlier sentence but to confirm it, especially when ampler juridical effects follow from this confirmation (so that the later sentence becomes in some manner an extension of the former); and, secondly, if a new ground of proceeding is present and a new process can be instituted, namely a new accusation and testimony, as happens in this sacrament by the renewed confession, contrition, and satisfaction.

Moreover, the judicial power of this sacrament is conferred for binding and loosing, and can be exercised formally and of its own force even concerning sins already confessed, insofar as they are matter subjected to it. Nor does it matter that these sins cannot in fact be bound, for that is accidental and is due to the object. Likewise, with respect to sins of which accusation is actually made, if they have been taken away by sorrow, the power of binding cannot in fact be exercised, except in the sense that judgment might be passed concerning their aptitude to be remitted or not, according to the aptitude with which they are presented. The same can occur with sins not yet confessed but already remitted.

Furthermore, even when the matter is considered materially and from the standpoint of the object (inasmuch as from sins not yet confessed or remitted some can be remitted and others bound, whereas none of those already absolved can actually be bound), it is nevertheless no wonder that this sacrament's judicial power, in its full character, is directed toward binding and loosing and should be exercised fully upon its principal object (that is, sins not yet confessed), yet should in fact be exercised under only one aspect, and that a preferable one, upon some secondary object.

This may even be confirmed from the practice of civil courts. "For in human affairs as well it happens that, to cases principally assigned to a tribunal, others are joined by way of an appendage. But the accessory follows the principal, as the rule of law states. Hence, although venial sins or sins already duly confessed do not of themselves require the judicial process instituted for other sins, nevertheless, anyone who for the good of his soul and for the special grace of the sacrament of Penance wishes to submit such matter to this tribunal must observe the procedure proper to that tribunal; and that procedure is governed, as is fitting, by its principal and necessary object, not by a secondary and merely accessory object."[123]

[123] Billot, De Poenitentia, thesis 5, § 2; Rome, 1930, p. 56.

Nor do the reasons advanced from the sacramental nature [of Penance] hold.

First of all, the matter of the sacrament is by no means lacking. For the acts of the penitent, which are the proximate matter, can be repeated concerning the same sins, and thus there is new matter for a new sacrament; this newness of the proximate matter is sufficient and altogether required for the newness of the sacrament, since it alone is its immediate and proper constituent. The sins themselves, which are its remote matter, enter, as has been said, in their objective being, in virtue of which they can be the object or matter of the acts of the penitent. Moreover, nothing requires, of itself and necessarily, that the remote matter of one sacrament be new or numerically distinct from the remote matter of another sacrament of the same species, as is evident in Baptism, Confirmation, Extreme Unction, and Orders, which can be repeated with the same water, the same oil, and the same hands. The argument applies with even greater force to Penance, in which sins are not remote matter out of which the sacrament is intrinsically constituted, but rather matter about which it is extrinsically concerned.

Accordingly, neither is the truth of the form impeded by the absence of sins from the subject, since those very sins are present in another way; nor is it impeded by the identity of the matter, since the acts of the penitent are new and distinct and sins are only remote matter and that about which the sacrament is concerned. (The fact that in the Eucharist even the remote matter must be distinct arises solely from the special nature of that sacrament, whose matter is permanently consecrated; this

does not happen in other sacraments, as in the water of Baptism, in which the sacrament's efficacy flows only transiently, and much less in Penance, whose sins are not consecrated but abhorred.) Neither is it impeded by the absence of the effect: first, because this does not prevent the truth of the form even in other sacraments, as will be stated in Article 79; secondly, because in fact the effect expressed in the form of absolution is produced under some true aspect when already-remitted sins are absolved, as will now be explained.

Finally, as regards the effect, we must first observe that, even if no remission of sin whatsoever could take place, this would not prevent the validity of the sacrament (as happens with every sacrament that is valid but unfruitful, and so is deprived of its principal effect). For, as was said in the treatise On the Sacraments in General (p. 68; cf. also St. Thomas, q. 84, a. 3, ad 5), some cause truly exists and can truly exert its influence even though its effect does not follow in the subject because a required condition is lacking; in the present case this would be the absence of sin to be remitted, or the circumstance that its remission had already been accomplished (cf. below, Article 79, on the meaning of the form of absolution).

In fact, however, through the absolution of sins already remitted some effect can be produced in the subject.

First, sacramental grace can be produced, which is of itself remissive of sins (inasmuch as the remission of sins is formally contained in it, as in its formal cause). Nor does it matter that it does not in fact exercise its formal effect because of the subject's condition, and that the sacrament does not attain its ultimate effect except in its immediate and formal cause. To this purpose the Salmanticenses say: "Although there be no sin present, even a venial one (as sometimes happens), to be blotted out by the sacrament, nevertheless there is a radical and virtual expulsion of sins included in the very increase of grace. ... For [this expulsion] is contained in the depths of that very grace as an effect or intrinsic terminus, and when produced through Penance it includes the expulsive power against sins, from which it cannot be separated in the order of being. Yet because actual expulsion is a secondary effect of that grace, without which its primary character can be preserved, it is quite consistent both that no sin is in fact remitted, because there is none, and that this very grace, as remissive, is nevertheless an effect of absolution, or, if preferred, insofar as it is of itself remissive. For although the secondary effect can sometimes be separated from the primary, as what is introduced can be separated from what induces it, the primary is nevertheless never found without containing radically a secondary effect sufficient of itself, and without implying a natural aptitude for it."[124]

[124] Salmanticenses, De Poenitentia, disp. 3, dub. 2, § 3, nn. 94 ff.; Paris, 1883, p. 182.

Secondly, the remission of sins itself can also, in some respect, be produced.

To explain this, Billot again introduces here his theory of the intentional causality of the sacraments, boasting that it enables him to solve the present difficulty and so obtain a remarkable confirmation of his theory. He says, in fact, that the proper and immediate effect of sacramental absolution is only something belonging to the intentional order (as in all the sacraments), namely a title giving the right to absolution or the remission of sins. He therefore concedes that in absolution from sins already remitted there is not a second effect of remission, but denies that an effect of the sacrament is not produced, because the title to remission is here produced, as it always is.[125]Yet this explanation

has value only insofar as the theory on which it rests has value; we showed that theory to be false in the treatise On the Sacraments in General (Article 10), and shall refute it again below in Article 79.

[125] Billot writes: "If you recall the doctrine of the preceding proposition concerning the reality of a sacrament, and consider the explanation there given of the words of the form, 'I confer on you the sacrament of absolution' [that is, I give you by sacrament a title to absolution], you will see the difficulty vanish. For whether one supposes sin to have been remitted elsewhere or not, the sacrament always has the same signification and its entire immediate effect, since it always signifies and newly gives, by Penance committed to the power of the keys, the title to the remission of sins. Moreover, just as that title, apart from the truth of the form, could fail to obtain its terminus in the case of a valid but unfruitful sacrament, so too it can attain it only inadequately in view of the capacity present in the subject. And thus it happens in the present case. For a man always receives sacramentally the title to remission, but where the actual imputation of an offense has already been removed, that title in fact avails only toward an increase of grace according to the proper measure of that increase. Hence conversely, inasmuch as the title formally bestowed is always a new title, nothing prevents sins already forgiven through perfect contrition from still having to be submitted to the tribunal of Penance. For then the sacramental absolution truly follows with its sacramental effect, and there is discharged an obligation under which, by reason of the sin committed, the man remained bound to the keys" (loc. cit., § 1, pp. 54 ff.).

We therefore say that the effect produced in this case is the remission itself of sins already remitted in another manner.

To understand this, observe that sin, like every offense, involves two things: first, imputability itself, which is found rather on the side of the person offended; and, secondly, its effects in the offender, namely the punishment and stain of sin. Accordingly two things must be considered in the remission of sin: the removal of imputability and the removal of its effects, or of the punishment and stain of sin. With respect to the former removal, earlier sins can be said to be remitted again, or not imputed, not indeed properly speaking and as though God still retained the right of imputing them (as is proved against Lugo in Article 79), but in a certain improper sense: for although God in the first remission forgave them simply and absolutely, so that properly speaking they are no longer imputable, nevertheless he can repeat the same act of benevolence whereby he previously forgave them, as a sort of confirmation of a remission already made; much as a person, in confirming an obligation he has assumed, repeats his religious profession before the appointed time has elapsed, or renews matrimonial consent already given.

Thus the whole difficulty comes down to the question of how the remission of sin, as regards the removal of punishment and stain, can be said to occur in the absolution of sins already remitted.

We answer that it can truly occur and be contained in the repeated infusion of both common and properly sacramental grace. For although through this renewed infusion of grace sins already remitted cannot again be absolved and taken away according to their form considered absolutely, since this was accomplished simply and irrevocably by the preceding absolution, they can nevertheless truly be said to be absolved and taken away in their causes and roots, in their effects and remains, and even in a certain way in themselves, under a relative consideration of the privation of grace.

First, they are taken away in their causes and roots. For the root of sins, both according to the generic character of sin and according to its particular species, is either the mutability of the human will or the positive inclination to evil left by original sin through the wound of malice. The renewed infusion of the sacramental grace of Penance brings a remedy to both causes and roots, strengthening the

human will against relapse into those sins and thus, in a certain manner, destroying them in their root.

They are also taken away in their effects and remains, namely both the temporal punishment owed for sin and the particular inclination to evil left in man by any sin (for from human acts there gradually arises a disposition or habit, good or bad); both are diminished by the repeated sacramental grace.

Finally, they are in a certain way taken away in themselves, not according to their form considered absolutely, which is the stain already perfectly destroyed by the preceding absolution, but under the relative consideration of the privation of grace, that is, most formally insofar as they are a privation of grace.

For since the privation and the possession of a form are correlatives, and since a form is increased according to the deeper rootedness of a habit in the subject, it follows that, as grace increases and takes deeper and deeper root, its privation (which is sin) recedes farther and is lessened—not indeed in its essence, which has already departed with the possession of the essence of grace, but in what may be called the negative degrees corresponding to the positive degrees of grace. This also seems to be expressed in these words of St. Thomas: "In the second absolution an increase of grace is conferred; and the greater the grace received, the less of the uncleanness of the preceding sin remains" (Supplement, q. 18, a. 2, ad 4).

Nor is it a valid objection that in this way sins would be destroyed by the sacramental grace of any sacrament of the living, or indeed by any increase of grace outside the sacraments. For sacraments of the dead are directed of themselves and directly to the destruction of sin; that is, they regard the effect of grace formally as privative and destructive of sin.

Nor is it a valid objection that, from the explanation given, the remission of sins through the infusion of grace would follow even where no sin has existed, as in the sanctification of Christ, the angels, and Adam. For grace is remissive not precisely because it involves the simple absence or negation of sin, but because it involves its privation; and a privation is the negation or absence of something due, and therefore presupposes a previous condition or debt of sin. Moreover, the remission of sin stands as the terminus toward which the entire movement of justification tends; and justification is not a passage from the nonexistence of grace to the existence of grace, as in simple sanctification, but from the existence of sin to the existence of grace. Therefore grace is not remissive where no sin has preceded.

Nor is it a valid objection, from the explanation given, that a sacrament would be validly administered to a person who accuses himself of one doubtful sin that in fact he did not commit, since the absolution and the effect of remissive grace could fall upon other past sins already remitted. For in such a case the sacrament is lacking, because confession, contrition, and absolution are lacking on account of the defect of an object; hence the effect of the sacrament, or remissive grace, is also lacking.

The Salmanticenses write to the point: "It seems more consistent with the teaching of St. Thomas that, through repeated sacraments, the remission of sins should become greater and greater. ... But how this is so we have already explained, as the attentive reader can see, from St. Thomas himself in the question On Truth, q. 8, art. 6: 'The remission of guilt implies not only the removal of the

absence of grace, but also the removal of the impediment to grace that arose from the act of preceding sin. not that the preceding act should not have occurred (for this is impossible), but that the influx of grace should not be impeded on account of it.' Thus in the treatise On Sins, disp. 16, dub. 3, § 5, n. 74, and more fully in the treatise On Justification, disp. 1, we established that the terminus toward which justification tends is not bare nonexistence, but the privation of grace; yet this privation implies all the impediments by which a man is hindered from obtaining grace, namely actual sins morally remaining and not yet retracted.

"On this reasoning we preserve (and the Thomists generally preserve) the passage alleged from the treatise On Sins, dub. 5, § 7, n. 150, on the plurality of habitual sins in a single sinner. For although the privation of grace is only one in the being of the thing, just as there is only one grace, nevertheless in the being of a terminus, and of a moral privation, there are as many sins as there are habitual sins, just as there were preceding actual sins. For although grace itself is excluded only by the first actual sin, each of the others is of itself destructive of it and adds a new impediment to its presence. Hence the privations of grace are so to speak multiplied, as are the actual sins. Likewise, as we maintained above in disp. 18, dub. 1, § 3, n. 18, there is a certain *lack of the beatific vision*, in which the punishment of loss consists, which, though one in the being of the thing, is greater in proportion to the greater penalty merited by the more numerous and more serious sins that have intervened; for the more one is removed from the form, the more it increases, and the absence of the form increases. For this reason the Angelic Doctor very rightly taught in II Sent., dist. 43, q. 2, art. 5, that 'the greater the blindness of one man is said to be compared with another's when he loses sight through the concurrence of a cataract, rather than through some other humor in the pupil, although both are blind'; for the former blindness arises from a stronger cause than the latter, and the stronger the cause or the greater it is, the greater the removal from the form and therefore the greater its absence.

"From these principles, laid down in the places cited and established expressly, it is sufficiently clear that in order to exclude a form and introduce its absence we must attend not so much to the form itself or the excluded terminus (which could never be absent except through one absence, just as there is only one form), as to the titles or causes of exclusion, the increase of which increases the lack or the terminus excluded, though not in the being of the thing, yet in the being of a terminus or under the aspect of exclusion. Thus, although any privation of a form is said to exist because nothing of the form remains in the subject, nevertheless it admits of becoming greater, as it were intensively, by reason of the causes and obstacles by which the form is more and more excluded from the subject.

"In this sense, therefore, although in the first justification sin is wholly excluded as a stain and an offense, and consequently nothing remains to be excluded by subsequent sacraments, and even the debt of temporal punishment itself has been extinguished, so that there remains no obligation to undergo any punishment, which no one will deny to be possible. Nevertheless, through repeated sacraments there is a greater and more intensive remission in the being of remission, although not in the being of the thing. For remission, as we heard above from St. Thomas, implies not only the exclusion of the absence of grace, but also the removal of the obstacles to that grace. And through repeated sacraments of Penance, on the one hand the penitent elicits more acts of detestation, by which he is further removed from acts contrary to grace which obstruct it; and on the other hand, through the sacraments themselves, grace increases under the aspect of a remedy, which shortly is the terminus and effect of this sacrament. Therefore it seems consequent that a greater remission

occurs the more the preceding sacraments are repeated, since the more a man is removed from sin, the more closely he is united to God."[126]

[126] Salmanticenses, De Poenitentia, disp. 3, dub. 2, § 3, nn. 100 ff.; Paris, 1883, pp. 184 ff.

Moreover, the three modes just described, in which sins already confessed are said to be remitted and absolved again through the sacrament, converge upon one proper aspect of the sacramental grace of Penance, which is a medicinal grace that repairs actual sin. For by several modes a spiritual healing from the disease of sin is effected through the infusion of the contrary virtues of grace, and can be repeated or continued without limit, according to the intrinsic infinity belonging to the correlative relations of sin and grace.

To recapitulate: it is verified in four ways that the absolution of sins already remitted has a sacramental effect, indeed that it remits sins: first, because of itself it influences this remission, even if in fact the remission does not follow on account of the condition of the subject; secondly, because it confers grace which is of itself formally remissive of sins, although for the same reason the formal effect of grace is here impeded; thirdly, because under a certain improper aspect it absolves the sinner again from the moral imputability of sins, this depending on the will of God who was offended; fourthly, because by infusing an increase of reparative sacramental grace it in some manner destroys sins themselves in their roots, in their remains, and in their character of privation or opposition to grace according to its degrees.

Conclusion IV. Venial sins (whether remitted or not yet remitted, whether confessed or not yet confessed) are secondary and non-necessary, yet sufficient, matter.

Proof.

That these sins are only secondary matter is evident because they are not sins principally and simply so called, since they do not involve a direct turning away from God, in which the essence of sin simply so called consists.

That they are non-necessary matter follows both from the same reason and from the fact that they need not necessarily be removed through the sacrament, unlike mortal sins, since actual displeasure is not required for their remission in the same way; and also from the fact that they can be removed by many other remedies, as the Council of Trent expressly teaches (chapter 5, cited above, p. 214). Besides this explicit teaching of the Church, the common sense of the faithful shows the same, as does the custom of the primitive Church (until the fourth century) of not submitting these sins to the keys, and consequently of receiving this sacrament less frequently.

That they are nevertheless sufficient matter is evident:

1. From the fact that they are true sins, although not sins simply so called, and that Christ gave the power of remitting all sins.

2. From the fact that the grace, effect, and end of this sacrament are spiritual medicine and restoration; and these can also be applied to lighter illnesses and injuries, which, moreover, dispose a person to mortal illness.

3. From the fact that otherwise the secret character of confession would not be sufficiently protected. For the very fact that someone approached confession would betray him as guilty of mortal sin, at least in the past; thus recourse to the sacrament would become difficult because of human weakness, although it is a harsh but highly beneficial medicine. It follows that this sacrament could not fittingly have been instituted unless it were also efficacious for remitting venial sins alone.

4. From the fact that otherwise many holy souls would be deprived of the use of this sacrament and its strengthening grace. Many devout souls could not make use of the sacrament without always recalling and confessing some past grave sin; yet this is not always expedient, and indeed it quite often harms scrupulous consciences. Thus the most effective means of frequently and seriously examining one's conscience and promoting progress in virtue would be withdrawn from all the faithful.

5. From the common practice of the faithful, defended also by the Council of Trent against Luther and by Pius VI against the Jansenists of Pistoia (cf. above, p. 215). Nor is it valid to object, with Luther himself (cited above, pp. 212 ff.), that the ancient Church omitted the confession of venial sins. For the only deduction that may be drawn from this is not that the worth and utility of this sacrament, when fully understood or duly appreciated, were accidental to it from the beginning. Moreover, confession of venial sins was already in use in monasteries under the rule of St. Basil in the fourth century (cf. Basil, *Regulae fusius tractatae*, question 26). Augustine too seems to allude to the sacramental confession of venial sins in his exposition of Psalm 88, section 16: "Always confess; always have something to confess. It is difficult in this life for a man to change so far that nothing can be found in him to be reproved" (Migne, PL 37, 1281). Tertullian also mentions the same practice in *On Modesty*, chapters 18 ff., and Cyprian in *On the Lapsed*, chapter 28, both cited in Article I (pp. 104 and 113).

6. From the Council of Trent (chapter 5 and canon 7, cited above, pp. 214 ff.). For against Luther it defines that it is lawful to confess venial sins; yet the lawfulness of such confession is not properly understood unless the force of the sacrament is exercised concerning those very sins, since sacramental confession is ordered to that end. Nor is it valid to object that the lawfulness or necessity of confessing doubtful sins does not prove that they are sufficient matter: for sins which are subjectively doubtful, formally as such, cannot by their very nature be the matter of a sacrament that confers something certain through the words of absolution. The reason they can lawfully or necessarily be accused is not that they are subjectively doubtful, but that they may be objectively certain—that is, true sins, which can therefore be removed through the sacrament.

The Council also teaches that venial sins "can be expiated by many other remedies"; by this it equivalently affirms that they can also be expiated through this sacrament.

Moreover, it approves the pious practice of the faithful of confessing venial sins.

Nor is it valid to object that, from the teaching of the Council of Trent, it follows only that venial sins are matter that can be removed by the sacrament, but not that they are sufficient matter, so that a sacrament can be valid when only venial sin is confessed. For although this is not said explicitly, it is

gathered from the whole context. The Council approves the practice of the faithful, which is to confess venial sins even alone; it equivalently asserts, as has been said, that venial sins can be expiated through the sacrament; and it nowhere introduces a restriction to the case in which they are accused along with mortal sins. Indeed, it also teaches without restriction (chapter 5): "While the faithful of Christ strive to confess all the sins that occur to their memory, undoubtedly they expose them all to be pardoned by the divine mercy."

Reply.

1. Venial sins are true sins, although they agree with mortal sins—which are sins simply so called—only analogically. And although they do not simply close the kingdom of heaven, they nevertheless delay entrance into it and, so long as they remain, exclude one from it until they are completely purged, at least in Purgatory.

2. Although sins are not taken away immediately by the infusion of grace as by a formal cause, nevertheless their removal presupposes the state of grace and is effected by an act of grace as by an efficient cause, so to speak. For this reason the present sacrament can remove venial sins through the infusion of grace, as will be explained below in Chapter VIII.

3. The reply to this has been given above (p. 218 ff.), where we dealt with the repeated absolution of mortal sins. Moreover, although venial sins cannot be retained on the part of the subject, as though their remission could be obtained only through the sacrament, they can be retained on the part of the minister and of the sacrament, insofar as the minister can defer or deny absolution when sufficient signs of displeasure for sin are lacking.

4. The reply has been given above (ibid.).

5. Penance is a sacrament of the dead in itself and according to its primary intention; this does not exclude its extending to venial sins according to a secondary intention, especially since, under a certain principal aspect, it also regards persons who are actually living [in grace], namely those who are absolved from mortal sins already remitted through contrition or a preceding absolution. Moreover, as was said in the treatise On the Sacraments in General (art. 13), the distinction between sacraments of the dead and of the living is not strictly formal; formally speaking, Penance is a sacrament of reparative grace, which is also applicable to venial sins.

6. The influence of the sacrament ex opere operato is exercised upon venial sins through the infusion of grace, by whose act they themselves are removed, just as it is exercised more directly upon mortal sins through grace, by which they are formally taken away. Hence we deny that venial sins are removed by attrition; for they are removed by formal or virtual contrition, which proceeds from grace, as will be explained in Chapter VIII.

The theologians who say that venial sins can be remitted otherwise than through contrition[127] reply: 1. At least venial sins accused together with mortal sins are remitted through the sacrament by mere attrition, since a venial sin cannot be remitted before a mortal sin. 2. Venial sins already remitted through attrition can be absolved and remitted again by the sacrament, no differently from mortal

sins already remitted, as was said above. 3. It is probable that for the remission of venial sins in the sacrament, not even that attrition by which they are removed outside the sacrament is required; the absence of an obstacle, or of actual complacency in sin, is sufficient. Hence, if someone confesses venial sins with this disposition and without attrition, they are removed through the sacrament itself.

[127] Cf. Pesch, no. 199; Galtier, no. 458.

Note. Whether doubtful sins and imaginary or supposed sins are matter of this sacrament.

This question can be understood in three ways:

1. Whether these sins are matter that must necessarily be submitted to the sacrament, or confessed. This is treated more suitably in its own place (art. 39, notes 10, 11, and 12), where the necessity of confession and its object are discussed. There it is answered affirmatively concerning imaginary sins, but negatively (with a qualification) concerning doubtful sins.

2. Whether they are matter capable of being blotted out by the sacrament. The answer is affirmative for doubtful sins, but only in the case, as is evident, in which they are in fact and objectively sins; it is negative concerning imaginary sins, for these, by their very definition, have not been committed but are only thought to have been committed, and consequently do not exist, since the existence of a thing does not depend upon a person's opinion.

3. Whether they are sufficient matter, so that a valid sacrament can be effected concerning them alone. The answer is negative concerning imaginary sins (for, as has been said, these in no way exist in themselves). Concerning doubtful sins a distinction is required: formally considered as doubtful, they cannot be sufficient matter, nor can valid absolution be pronounced over them, since the words of absolution consist in an absolute affirmation ("I absolve you"); yet insofar as these sins can be objectively and in fact certain, they can in certain cases be absolved conditionally (and thus by themselves constitute sufficient matter for the sacrament), because, by reason of the condition attached, absolution is directed to them not as doubtful but as hypothetically objectively certain; and consequently, if the sacrament is in fact valid, they are its sufficient matter, not as doubtful but as certain.

Article 8. Whether sins committed before Baptism are matter of the sacrament of Penance

Article VIII. Whether Sins Committed before Baptism Are Matter of the Sacrament of Penance (q. 84, a. 2, ad 3; q. 69, a. 10, ad 2 and 3; In IV Sentences, dist. 4, q. 3, a. 2, q. 3, sed contra; dist. 16, q. 1, a. 2, q. 2).[128]

State of the Question.

[128] Cf. Cajetan, In III, q. 69, a. 10; Suárez, De Poenitentia, disp. 18, sect. 1; In III, disp. 28, sect. 5; Vázquez, disp. 159 ff.; Lugo, disp. 3, sect. 1, no. 12 ff.; De sacramentis in genere, disp. 9, sect. 3, no. 22 ff. (especially no. 40 ff.), sect. 4; Salmanticenses, disp. 2, dub. 1, no. 4 ff.; Billot, De Baptismo, thesis 30; Pesch, De sacramentis in genere, nos. 314–316.

Sins committed before Baptism are divided into original sin (which cannot properly be said to have been committed, but rather contracted) and actual sins (or sins strictly personal and therefore properly committed), which are subdivided into mortal and venial sins. This last distinction has no

special importance in this and the following article; whatever is said of mortal sins also applies to venial sins (as regards their being matter of Baptism rather than of Penance), while preserving the proper differences noted in the preceding article (such as venial sins being sufficient, but not necessary, matter for both Penance and Baptism).

The question, therefore, is whether sins committed before Baptism, both original sin and especially actual sins, are matter of the sacrament of Penance (after Baptism has been received, as is evident), and not simply of Baptism alone. Theologians customarily ask two distinct questions:

1. Whether these sins are of themselves matter of Penance, at least non-necessary matter.

2. Whether they are matter of Penance at least accidentally, that is, only in the case of a person fictitiously baptized [one who receives Baptism with an obstacle to its fruit].

These questions are customarily treated by theologians either here, or where the effect or reviviscence of Baptism is discussed, or in the general question concerning the reviviscence of the sacraments.

The Negative and Affirmative Positions.

Theological Note.

That sins committed before Baptism are not matter of Penance before Baptism itself is received is equivalently defined as of faith by the Council of Trent, session 14, canon 1 (cited on p. 52), and is contained in the whole doctrine of faith concerning the nature of Baptism as the first sacrament and the gateway of the Church.

That original sin is not matter of Penance as a virtue (that is, that a person cannot properly repent of this sin) cannot be denied without incurring some theological note or censure. For Alexander VIII condemned, under some censure (not specified; cf. Denzinger after no. 1321), this proposition of the Jansenists: "Man ought to perform penance throughout his whole life for original sin" (Denz. 1309).

That actual sins (and, a fortiori, original sin) are not necessary matter of this sacrament, that is, that they need not necessarily be confessed, is at least theologically certain (and according to some, including Vázquez, is of faith). For the contrary appears directly opposed to the Council of Trent, which defines that this sacrament was instituted for reconciling the faithful who fall into sin after Baptism (canon 1), and thereupon immediately infers the necessity of confessing all mortal sins (canon 7).

That these same sins are not, of themselves and by themselves, sufficient matter cannot be denied without at least the note of temerity, as appears from the same teaching of the Council.

Documents of the Church.

The documents cited in the preceding article (p. 214 ff.) bear upon this question. Although they directly establish only that sins committed after Baptism are matter of Penance, by that very fact they indirectly exclude sins committed before Baptism from being matter of this sacrament. Regarding original sin, the document of Alexander VIII just cited must be added.

Theologians.

As to the first question, there is scarcely any controversy among theologians, who unanimously teach that sins committed before Baptism are not of themselves matter of Penance. Exceptions are the aforementioned opinion of the Jansenists concerning original sin, condemned by Alexander VIII, and a strange opinion of one or another among the older theologians, according to whom a man is bound by divine precept to confess actual sins committed before Baptism.

As to the second question, however, Scotus, Biel, and Vázquez disagree with the common opinion of theologians, which teaches that these sins are not matter of Penance even accidentally (that is, even in the case of the justification of a person fictitiously baptized, the sins being remitted through Baptism itself when its effect revives). They teach that, at least as more probable, in the aforesaid case sins committed before Baptism are remitted through Penance itself, which removes the sin of placing an obstacle and consequently, and accidentally, the other sins together with it.

Vázquez himself writes on the point (disp. 159, sect. 1, no. 38): "The interpretation which Scotus adopts is also probable, although Scotus and Gabriel contend that the preceding interpretation can also be defended in some manner. ... [For they] deny that Baptism, when the obstacle has ceased, effects the remission of any guilt ex opere operato. They say that this remission is effected entirely by the power of contrition alone, or by the sacrament of Penance which removes the obstacle; but to Baptism they concede only the remission of all punishment, even temporal punishment, for those sins alone which were committed before Baptism and in its reception."

CONCLUSION

Conclusion I. Sins committed before Baptism are not of themselves matter, even optional matter, of the sacrament of Penance.

This is proved from the proper nature of this sacrament.

FIRST REASON. This sacrament is specifically distinct from Baptism. Consequently it cannot of itself regard the proper object of Baptism, which is both the removal of original sin and the first remission of actual sin; both of these belong to spiritual regeneration.

Nor is it valid to object that the specific distinction between Baptism and Penance is derived from original sin and actual sin, the former being regarded by Baptism and the latter by Penance, so that at least actual sins committed before Baptism would be referred to Penance.

For if this were true, either Baptism would not remit actual sins, contrary to the Church's teaching (Council of Trent, session 5, canon 5); or it would remit them through the desire for Penance. In that event, on the one hand, Penance would in some manner precede Baptism and would be the first sacrament, since it would be by its power that Baptism operated; and on the other hand, in Baptism attrition would not suffice, but contrition, including the desire just mentioned, would be required. This likewise contradicts the teaching of the Church. The distinction between these two sacraments, however, is derived formally from the twofold character of spiritual regeneration and restoration. Thus original sin and actual sins committed before Baptism pertain to Baptism as the point from which spiritual regeneration begins.

SECOND REASON. Penance is the sacrament of spiritual restoration; or, as the Council of Trent teaches (in the passage cited in the preceding article, p. 214 ff.), it was instituted for those who have

fallen after Baptism. Therefore it in no way regards sins preceding Baptism, not even as optional matter.

Nor can one object that the Council's words establish only that Penance cannot be exercised before Baptism, and not that it cannot be exercised after Baptism with respect to sins committed earlier, since after Baptism a person is rightly called one who has fallen on account of sins committed previously.

For the evident meaning of the words "for those who have fallen after Baptism" is "for those who have fallen into sin after Baptism." Hence the temporal qualification "after Baptism" refers not merely to the persons who have fallen, or to their use of the sacrament—as though it were said that Penance was instituted for persons who, after Baptism, have whatever sins they may have—but to the sins themselves, or, if one prefers, to persons formally considered as fallen. Moreover, this meaning is explicitly proposed in other words of the Council of Trent (cited in the same place).

THIRD REASON. This sacrament is judicial. Consequently it can be exercised only in regard to sins committed under the jurisdiction of the Church, that is, in the Church to which a person becomes subject through Baptism. Moreover, original sin, since it is not voluntary, is in itself incapable of being judged.

Nor is it valid to object that it follows from this only that actual sins cannot be subjected to sacramental judgment before Baptism, but not that they cannot be so subjected after Baptism, when a person becomes subject to the Church.

For the reception of Baptism does indeed change the condition of the person, who becomes a subject from having been a non-subject; it does not, however, change the condition of the person's past acts. With respect to these, it remains true that they were committed outside the Church. Hence after Baptism the person himself and his new acts are subject to the Church, but not past sins.

FOURTH REASON. This sacrament is penitential, or has acts of penance as an essential constituent. Therefore it cannot absolutely have original sin for its matter, since a person cannot feel contrition for or repent of original sin, which was not committed by his personal will.

For only by taking the virtue of penance improperly, as any detestation of a past evil whatsoever, can original sin be called an object of the virtue of penance: inasmuch as a person can and ought, concerning that sin—which was offensive to God, disturbed the order of nature, excluded from glory, introduced liability to punishment and concupiscence, and impelled toward personal sin—to elicit an act of displeasure and detestation. Such an act is elicited, not by the virtue of penance, but by various other virtues: piety and charity toward God, love of order and justice, desire and hope of glory, and charity toward oneself and other persons.

On this point St. Thomas, III, q. 84, a. 2, ad 3, having said that penance concerns mortal sin properly and principally, and venial sin properly but not principally, adds: "But penance concerning original sin is neither principal (because this sacrament is not ordained against it, but rather Baptism), nor even proper, because original sin was not committed by our will, except perhaps insofar as the will of Adam is reckoned our own, according to the manner of speaking which the Apostle uses [Rom. 5:12]: 'In whom all have sinned.' Yet insofar as penance is taken broadly for any detestation of a past

thing, there can be said to be penance for original sin, as Augustine says in the book On Penance [to be cited presently]" (cf. a. 8, corpus).

In IV Sentences, distinction 16, q. 1, a. 2, quaestiuncula 2: "Penance ... may be understood broadly and properly. Properly, penance implies sorrow for a sin committed in the past; and thus in no way can there be penance for original sin, because it was not committed. Broadly, however, penance may be said to be any displeasure at a past evil; and thus in one who has free will there ought to be penance for original sin: because from the very fact that something is pleasing to someone, that which presents an obstacle to it displeases him. But original sin was an obstacle to glory, toward which everyone ought to tend by desire. Nevertheless there ought not to be confession concerning it, which pertains only to what has been done; nor satisfaction, because for original sin nothing is due except the punishment of loss, whereas penance implies a punishment of sense" (cf. distinction 17, q. 2, a. 2, quaestiuncula 2).

The anonymous author of the book On True and False Penance (cf. above, p. 5), cited just now by St. Thomas under the name of Augustine, has these words, chapters 8, 19–22: "Penance ... is not necessary for those who are to be baptized; but those already baptized must repent of greater and lesser sins. For by the faith of the Church alone are the sins which a man contracted in his origin remitted: as he received damnation from a sinning father, so through the faith of Mother Church he obtains remission. But he who has sinned himself has acquired pardon through his own sorrow and through the faith of the Church. ...

"Let us grieve that we are exiles from our homeland; let us grieve that we live in corruptible matter [which are consequences of original sin]. This sorrow arises more from desire than from punishment. (Hence it differs from penance. For penance is a kind of vengeance taken by one who grieves, as he punishes in himself what he grieves to have committed. But he who grieves that he is detained in a mortal body desires what he loves, lamenting what delays him. All penance is for liberty ill used; but this sorrow is rather due to necessity. No sin, however, is necessary. Original sin is evil on this account, that it was spontaneous in Adam. ...) This sorrow [over original sin] arises not from a conscience of having sinned, but from charity at work; it does not punish an evil but increases a good; it is not borne impatiently, but is embraced out of desire. ... Thus not every sorrow is penance" (Migne, Latin Patrology, vol. 40, cols. 1119–1121).

Consequently the manner of speaking used by Lugo cannot be approved: he appears to grant that the virtue of penance itself can, under some aspect, elicit an act of detestation concerning original sin. For he writes: "Father Suárez, in the present disputation II, section 5, no. 11, establishes a distinction between habitual sin and original sin in relation to penance: habitual sin, because it is voluntary, can pertain to penance strictly considered; original sin, however, because it is not from our own action but from the sin of Adam, can pertain only to penance broadly understood, insofar as one can elicit an act of hatred concerning it, as concerning the condition of enmity toward God, from whatever source it arose. As to the second part, we readily concede that the virtue of penance can detest original guilt, as opposed to peace with God and as offensive to the divine majesty; nevertheless, it cannot elicit an act of retractation concerning that guilt, because no one can properly and physically retract what he did not physically do, although he could be sorrowful concerning that very thing. For, formally speaking, penance seems only to will not to have given God an occasion for aversion; therefore, by this virtue I cannot grieve over an occasion of guilt not furnished by me but by another,

as is the case with original guilt. Yet we should not contend much about this, since this virtue may perhaps detest an offense against God from whatever source it proceeds and without any limitation, if it formally intends only the good of peace; this is not to have God as an enemy, a good opposed by original guilt."[129]

[129] Disp. Schol., t. 4, De Poenit., disp. 3, sect. 1, n. 12, Parisiis, 1892, p. 398 sq.

You will say, first. There appears to be nothing to prevent sins committed before Baptism, at least actual sins, from being at least optional and sufficient matter of this sacrament: not on the part of the person, since he is subject to the power of the Church and enjoys the privileges of Christians; nor on the part of the proximate matter, since the person can elicit an act of contrition concerning those sins too; nor on the part of the remote matter, since those sins are of the same kind as others committed after Baptism; nor on the part of the sacrament's influence insofar as it remits sins, since the same sins can be remitted more than once, as is evident with respect to postbaptismal sins repeatedly submitted to the power of the keys.

Reply. The first three reasons given above stand in the way (above all, the very judicial character of this sacrament); the other conditions invoked by the objector must be brought into accord with these and must satisfy them.

You will say, secondly. Although it does not follow from the very character of this sacrament that sins committed before Baptism are its matter, this can nevertheless arise from a positive precept of Christ. Such a precept does in fact appear to be contained in John 20:23 and Matthew 16:19; 18:18, since these texts speak without qualification or distinction of the power to retain and remit sins.

Reply. From the very character of this sacrament it follows not merely that such sins are not its matter, but that they are positively and directly excluded. Thus the possibility of the aforesaid precept is itself ruled out, since such a precept would be contrary to the nature of the sacrament and would imply a contradiction in the will of its institutor.

Conclusion II. Sins committed before Baptism are not, even accidentally, matter of the sacrament of Penance, namely in the case of the justification of a person who received Baptism with an obstacle to its effects.

This is proved by nearly the same reasons advanced above.

FIRST REASON. Spiritual regeneration is the proper and inalienable effect of Baptism, according to John 3:5: "Unless a man be born again of water ..."; and the Council of Trent: "[The translation from the state of original sin to the state of grace] cannot take place without the laver of regeneration or the desire thereof" (session 6, chapter 4; cf. session 5, canons 3 and 5). But if, in the case under discussion, sins committed before Baptism were matter of Penance, spiritual regeneration would take place through Penance, not through Baptism, either in reality or in desire; and thus, of the person in that case, it would not be true that he was born again of water.

You will say, following the mind of Vázquez. In that case the influence of Baptism is retained in several ways, and accordingly it remains true that the person is regenerated of water and justified through Baptism in desire. For, first, Baptism with water preceded; secondly, from it proceeds the fact that the person can receive the sacrament of Penance and that Penance can exercise its influence when the obstacle is removed, so as to remit sins committed before Baptism; thirdly, Penance does

this only with reference to Baptism, from which it possesses the ability to exercise its own power, just as in justification before Baptism contrition remits those same sins by desire, or with reference to Baptism (for contrition has the same character both before and after Baptism, and is referred to Baptism in either case); fourthly, even a direct influence or revival of Baptism may be admitted as regards sacramental graces (such as the total remission of punishment), which perfect the common grace conferred directly by Penance.

Reply. All these things bear only an extrinsic and remote relation to the very removal of original sin and to that first regenerative justification, which, in this case, would remain the direct effect of the sacrament of Penance alone.

For the fact that Baptism preceded, and that the possibility of Penance exercising its influence in some way depends upon it, is merely extrinsic and conditional, and belongs indiscriminately to the efficacy of all the sacraments. The same holds for the reference to Baptism. But the alleged parallel between justification before Baptism through contrition with the desire for Baptism and the present case is denied: first, because in the former case it is not contrition but the sacrament which justifies; secondly, because perfect contrition is not required in the sacrament of Penance, but attrition suffices; and thirdly, because here there is no desire for Baptism (which always precedes the thing desired), but only a reference to it. Finally, the influence or revival of Baptism in respect of sacramental graces alone, considered as distinct from the removal of original sin and from first regenerative justification, would still be something extrinsic to the essence of spiritual regeneration itself; nor can anything else be appropriately understood by it, as will shortly be explained.

SECOND REASON. Penance is a restorative, judicial, and penitential sacrament. Such a sacrament cannot have as its object sins committed before Baptism, even by way of relation, as explained above. Therefore it cannot remit these sins in the case in question unless it puts off its proper character and nature; that is, unless it is at once itself and not itself, which is a contradiction in terms.

THIRD REASON. Baptism cannot even accidentally and indirectly remit future sins committed within the Church. Therefore, by parity of reasoning, neither can Penance remit in that fashion past sins committed outside the Church.

FOURTH REASON. No sacrament can, even accidentally and indirectly, produce the proper effect of another sacrament; otherwise their specific distinction, derived precisely from the effect signified, would not be maintained.

You will say, first. The sacraments of the living accidentally cause first grace, which belongs properly to the sacraments of the dead; and the latter accidentally cause second grace, which belongs properly to the sacraments of the living.

Reply. As was said in the treatise On the Sacraments in General (article 13), the proper and formal effect, or the sacramental grace of the individual sacraments, is not first or second grace, but regenerative, strengthening, nourishing, restorative grace, and so forth, which is conferred only by its corresponding sacrament.

You will say, secondly. In the case in question the sacrament of Penance would not produce the proper effect or sacramental grace of Baptism (namely the total remission of punishment, special helps for living the Christian life, and the other effects listed in the treatise On Baptism, article 7),

but only the removal of sins through the bestowal of common grace. This does not belong to the sacramental grace of Baptism, as is plain from the fact that it is also obtained through contrition before the sacrament of Baptism, whereas sacramental grace cannot be conferred except by a sacrament.

Reply. The first removal of sins by the bestowal of common grace, although not strictly and formally the sacramental grace of Baptism, nevertheless remains its proper effect, which can be conferred only by Baptism in reality or in desire, and therefore is in some sense assimilated to sacramental grace.

The reason is that this removal is not only first grace (as opposed to an increase of grace or second grace), as is the grace proper to the sacrament of Penance; it is also first justification (as opposed to the second justification conferred through the sacrament of Penance). Hence it cannot be conferred except through the first sacrament, Baptism, in reality or in desire, and not through another sacrament in which a desire for Baptism might, as it were, be contained. Herein lies the difference from the sacrament of Penance: its effect of common first grace can be supplied not only through contrition, which is Penance in desire, but also accidentally through any sacrament of the living which, when received in good faith, causes first grace accidentally and, as it were, in desire of the sacrament of Penance.

Moreover, if the sacrament of Penance were to produce baptismal grace with respect to the removal of sins, it ought at the same time to produce the properly so-called sacramental grace of Baptism; otherwise that grace would be irrevocably frustrated in the person who had received Baptism with an obstacle, since it could not be produced by any other cause.

Nor does it avail to say that this grace is produced by Baptism then reviving. For if Baptism, upon reviving, does not cause common grace, it cannot cause sacramental grace, since the latter (at least according to the more common opinion of the Thomists) is a certain mode or modification of common grace. But it belongs to the same cause to produce both the substance of a thing and its modes, and the latter are not caused except through the former.

Nor is it valid to oppose the case of contrition justifying before Baptism, by which common grace alone is caused, while Baptism afterwards supplies sacramental grace. For, as has been shown above, contrition, unlike Penance, precedes Baptism and acts in desire of Baptism (so that even its effect with regard to the bestowal of common grace is attributed to Baptism itself acting in desire, just as sacramental grace is attributed to that same Baptism acting in reality). Thus sacramental grace, which was not bestowed through contrition, is supplied by Baptism, not separately from common grace, but with it and through it, when Baptism confers on a person already justified second grace (which, as stated in the treatise On the Sacraments in General, article 13, does not differ substantially from first grace), and by this means produces the modality of grace which is sacramental grace.

FIFTH REASON. According to the common opinion of theologians after Augustine and St. Thomas (cf. the treatise On the Sacraments in General, article 11), Baptism revives when the obstacle of dissimulation has been removed. But if, in this case, sins were remitted by the sacrament of Penance, both the necessity and even the possibility of the revival of Baptism would be excluded. For the reason which theologians assign for the necessity of this revival is the defect of another cause, besides Baptism itself, which could remove original sin;[130] and the possibility of revival presupposes matter upon which Baptism can exercise its influence.

[130] St. Thomas, On IV Sentences, distinction 4, q. 3, a. 2, quaestiuncula 3, sed contra: "For every fault in this life a remedy can be applied. But against original fault there is no remedy other than Baptism. Therefore, since original fault is not remitted in those who approach [Baptism] with an obstacle, Baptism would have to be repeated if, once the obstacle had departed, Baptism did not have its effect—which is unacceptable and heretical."

Nor can it be said that Baptism can and must revive for the purpose of conferring sacramental grace while leaving to the efficacy of Penance the conferral of common grace. For this would not be revival in the unqualified sense, nor revival for the removal of original sin as understood by theologians; and, moreover, it seems impossible, as was just stated.

This reason has little force against Vázquez, who, conversely, on account of the efficacy which he ascribes to Penance in regard to sins committed before Baptism, readily inclines to deny the perfect revival of Baptism, properly and simply so called. Thus he interprets rather arbitrarily the words of Augustine (On Baptism, I, 12, 18), cited by St. Thomas in proof of its revival (III, q. 69, a. 10), namely, "[Baptism] then begins to avail unto salvation when the obstacle has departed," as meaning that, when the obstacle has been removed, Baptism avails unto salvation not insofar as it confers grace, but insofar as the person, by receiving Baptism, even with an obstacle, fulfills the precept of receiving Baptism and is released from the obligation of receiving another Baptism; likewise, insofar as Baptism, though received with an obstacle, confers the capacity to receive the other sacraments; likewise, insofar as, even without conferring grace, it can be a condition required for the production of grace which is conferred only upon the baptized; and likewise, insofar as it can remove the whole temporal punishment due for sins, which the sacrament of Penance does not remove when it remits sins committed before Baptism.[131]

[131] The Salmanticenses, De Poenitentia, disputation 2, doubt 1, nos. 14 ff., and Lugo, De Sacramentis in genere, disputation 9, section 3, nos. 23 ff., aptly refute this interpretation put forward by Vázquez.

SIXTH REASON. There are two possible grounds for holding that, when Baptism has been received with an obstacle, sins committed before Baptism must be remitted through Penance: either Baptism has already passed away and cannot revive so as to remove its proper matter of sin, and hence another sacrament of the dead must take its place to produce that effect; or, although Baptism can revive, it cannot in fact exercise its reviving influence, because there is no matter left for it to remove, insofar as the sacrament of Penance, in removing actual sins committed after Baptism, must necessarily remove in the same person also the sins committed before Baptism which exist together with them.

But Baptism, though its administration has passed, can revive or exercise its influence by virtue of the character, in which its instrumental power remains, just as an animal's generative power remains in its seed. Moreover, its influence upon the remission of sins committed before Baptism can be exercised either by itself, when the obstacle was merely material (for this is removed through attrition, which does not depend upon the sacrament of Penance), or together with the influence of Penance, when the obstacle is formal (for this is removed by the sacrament of Penance in reality or in desire). In this latter case, the simultaneous influence of Penance, in removing the sin of the obstacle, not only does not impede the influence of Baptism, but concurs with it and assists it precisely as the remover of the obstacle which prevents Baptism's influence.

St. Thomas speaks directly to the point, III, q. 69, a. 10, ad 2: "The obstacle is not removed by Baptism, but by subsequent penance. Once it has been removed, Baptism takes away every fault and

the liability for all sins preceding Baptism and also for those existing at the very time of Baptism. Hence Augustine says in the book On Baptism: 'The preceding day is absolved, and whatever remains is absolved, even the very hour and instant before Baptism and in Baptism; but thereafter a person immediately begins to be guilty.' And thus Baptism and Penance concur in obtaining the effect of Baptism: Baptism as a cause acting of itself, and Penance as an accidental cause, that is, as removing what prevents its effect."

And in the same place, ad 3: "The effect of Baptism is not to take away future sins, but present or past sins; and therefore, when the obstacle has departed, subsequent sins are indeed remitted, but through Penance, not through Baptism. Hence they are not remitted as regards the whole liability, as are sins preceding Baptism."

To understand these matters, we must distinguish three cases in which a person who received Baptism with an obstacle is justified: first, a person who received Baptism with only a material or negative obstacle (that is, in good faith, through an unconscious lack of sufficient attrition), and who committed no other mortal sins after Baptism; secondly, a person who committed such further sins; and thirdly, one who approached the sacrament with a formal or positive obstacle (that is, knowingly and willingly receiving Baptism without the necessary disposition).

In the first case there is only one class of sins to be removed, namely those which preceded Baptism. Thus, against the almost isolated opinion of Vázquez (Disputation 160, chapter 2), it is manifest from the common opinion of theologians that these sins are remitted by Baptism alone upon its revival, once the obstacle of insufficient attrition has been removed by the very eliciting of attrition. Accordingly, even if the sacrament of Penance (concerning venial sins) or an act of contrition is employed, these acts exercise no influence except as conditions removing the obstacle; for they contain attrition equivalently and eminently—Penance, at least insofar as it is a part of the sacrament.

The reason is that, on the one hand, those sins are the object of the efficacy of Baptism; on the other hand, in order for that efficacy to operate, it is enough that the impediment on account of which it previously could not operate be removed. This happens through the very eliciting of attrition, since no other new impediment or sin has intervened that would require another cause for its removal, namely the sacrament of Penance in reality or in desire.[132]

[132] Cf. Lugo, De Sacramentis in genere, disputation 9, section 4.

In the second and third cases three classes of sins present themselves for removal: sins committed before Baptism; the sin itself of the formal obstacle, or of the sacrilegious reception of Baptism (found only in the third case); and sins committed after receiving Baptism. The first sins are the matter of Baptism; the others, namely the sin of the obstacle and the subsequent sins, are the matter of Penance. Hence both sacraments—Baptism as reviving, and Penance in reality or in the desire of contrition—concur at the same instant and toward the same justification, each by removing its own proper matter.

Nor is it an objection that the same effect, or the same justification, is at issue. For several causes can concur toward the same effect, yet with a different influence and according to their own different character. Thus toward the same effect there concur privation and form, corruption and generation, matter and form, a principal agent and an instrument, or two partial principal causes (as two men carrying a stone, or two horses drawing a cart). This holds especially and is most readily understood

when, as in the last three examples, there is question of bringing about the same effect by several causal principles, each of which, taken separately, exercises a different causal influence, so that no cause can by itself exercise its special influence upon the production of the whole effect unless the other causes concur with their own special influences.

Thus, in the case at hand, the sacraments of Baptism and Penance concur efficiently, through two specifically distinct influences which differ from and depend upon each other in their mode of operation, toward the one effect of justification, which is attributed to both. For this justification cannot occur unless both pre-baptismal and postbaptismal sins are removed; since the former can be removed only by Baptism, and the latter only by Penance, the concurrence of both must operate simultaneously, so that through the two distinct negative effects—namely, the two remissions of sins —the one positive effect of justification is brought about by both.

Nor is it an objection that, in this case, the influence of either cause not only requires but presupposes the influence of the other: Penance, for its part, cannot exercise its influence unless Baptism has first exercised its influence (for only one already regenerated can be restored); and Baptism cannot exercise its influence in reviving unless Penance has first exercised its influence (for the obstacle must first be removed by Penance). From this it may seem to follow that justification, which consists in something indivisible (since all sins must necessarily be remitted together by the infusion of one and the same grace), occurs either through Baptism alone, or through Penance alone, or through neither.

This, I say, is no obstacle whatever, nor does the inference follow. For the aforesaid priority and posteriority between the influences of Baptism and Penance do not imply an order in time but an order of nature; indeed, they do not even imply an order of nature between two distinct rational instants considered under the aspect of that in which the effects occur (as though in one prior rational instant the influence of one sacrament were understood to exist without the influence of the other, and vice versa in a different instant). Rather, it refers to the existence of both influences and imports an order of nature between two elements of the same rational instant in which they occur, and therefore only a priority and posteriority in the respect in which their influences depend upon one another.

Hence, in the very same instant both of time and of nature, indeed in the same rational instant considered as that in which the effects occur, the influences of Baptism and Penance are both exercised, and each with respect to all sins, though according to different kinds of causality for different sins, and with an equal dependence upon one another as upon a necessary condition. Thus both sacraments concur in the remission of pre-baptismal sins, though according to different kinds of causality and with different priorities and posteriorities of dependence: Baptism as an efficient cause (and thus prior in the order of efficient causality, but posterior and dependent in the order of material causality), and Penance as a condition (and thus prior in the order of material causality, but posterior and dependent in the order of efficient causality). Likewise both sacraments concur in the remission of the sin of the obstacle and of the other postbaptismal sins, but Penance as a cause and Baptism as a condition.

None of this is said arbitrarily. It is merely an application of the general Peripatetic-Thomistic teaching concerning the mutual influence and priority of causes which depend upon one another and concur toward the same effect.

To the point, the Salmanticenses aptly say: "This [doctrine] will be difficult only for those to whom the mutual priority of different causes, in which several causes concur, has become offensive, and who conceive of it as something, I know not what, monstrous and dreadful. Yet it is a plainly Peripatetic truth, indeed one known by the light of natural reason alone, which the Angelic Doctor often employed, and which, however otherwise insufficiently evident, is quite necessary for explaining many mysteries, whether of nature or of grace. Meanwhile, one should consider I–II, question 113, article 8, reply to the first objection, where he establishes it and illustrates it by manifest examples, teaching that 'on the part of the sun, to illuminate is prior to removing the darkness; but on the part of the air being illuminated, to be purged of darkness is prior to receiving light. Nevertheless, in the order of nature, both are simultaneous in time.'"

"From this it follows that when several causes concur simultaneously in one and the same illumination of the air, a priority belonging to each of them in its own kind is fully preserved. For, on the part of the sun efficiently concurring, active illumination is prior, and its effect is the cleansing away of the darkness by the intervening light. On the part of the air being illuminated, however, to be cleansed of the darkness is prior in the order of material causality to its being filled with light; otherwise darkness and light would exist simultaneously in the same part of the air, which is contradictory. And thus it is with innumerable other examples, as true as they are frequently employed by the disciples of St. Thomas. Nor does it follow from this—as some object, and as is more an invention of imagination than a sound argument—that either can be or come about without the other, or that the same illumination is produced twice. Rather, the result is that in one and the very same instant an effect is produced by several causes concurring in diverse ways according to the condition and, so to speak, the character of each. ..."

"Causes which depend upon one another in causing, even though they exercise their influence under different aspects, not only exist but are also understood in the same rational instant considered as the instant in which the effect occurs: one as dependent in that instant, and thus posterior; the other as independent, and therefore prior by a priority of origin, or of nature.[133] This is the common and true teaching of the Thomists, never shaken and never to be shaken, however severely adversaries may assail it. It is admirably explained by the authors of the Abbreviated Complutensian Course, Physics, disputation 8, question 2, section 1, no. 6, in these words: 'Consequently, although two things exist in the same real instant, indeed in the same rational instant, the one which does not depend on the other is said to be prior according to that aspect, while the one which depends is called posterior. For in this kind of priority the following inference does not hold: A is prior by nature to B; therefore A, in that prior state, exists without B. Rather, the inference must be: A is prior by nature to B; therefore, in that kind of priority, the prior A does not depend upon B, but B depends upon A.' Hence they rightly warn that these kinds of priority must be most carefully observed, since ignorance of them commonly gives rise to no small confusion in difficult questions."[134]

[133] Observe something similar in the mystery of the Trinity, or in the divine processions. The Father (not the cause but the principle of the Son) and the Son exist in the same instant of nature and are understood in the same rational instant in which they exist; nevertheless, between them, in the same instant of nature and in the same rational instant in which they exist, there is a difference by order of origin. Thus, by this order of origin, the Son is posterior, so that the Father can properly be called prior and the Son posterior. St. Thomas discusses at length in I, q. 33, a. 1, whether from this order of origin any priority and posteriority of origin can be founded. If anyone, as some other theologians maintain, would extend this so as to illustrate the present question, it could be said that just as the Father and the Son are understood in the same rational instant of existence while having priority and posteriority of origin, so the

influences of Baptism and Penance may occur simultaneously notwithstanding the same kind of priority and posteriority.

[134] Salmanticenses, De Poenitentia, disputation 2, doubt 1, § 3, no. 33, Paris, 1883, p. 111, line 13.

From what has been said arises the principal reason and objection upon which Vázquez bases his opinion. For he argues as follows: Baptism cannot influence the removal of sins committed before Baptism unless the obstacle of dissimulation is first removed through Penance. But that obstacle is removed through the infusion of grace, which expels all sins. Therefore even sins committed before Baptism are removed through Penance, and there remains nothing for Baptism, upon reviving, to remit, unless one says that it remits the same sins twice.

In asserting the major premise of this argument, which must be distinguished in the light of what was said above, Vázquez fails to consider that Penance removes the obstacle of dissimulation as an efficient cause, but with the simultaneous concurrence of Baptism itself as a condition. This concurrence consists precisely in Baptism removing sins committed before Baptism as an efficient cause. Hence he illegitimately concludes that Penance removes those very sins committed before Baptism, although Penance does concur at the same time as a condition of the causality of Baptism.

Article 9. Whether sins accompanying Baptism are matter of the sacrament of Penance

ARTICLE IX. WHETHER SINS ACCOMPANYING BAPTISM ARE MATTER OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE (III, q. 69, a. 10, ad 2 and 3)[135]

STATE OF THE QUESTION

By sins accompanying Baptism are understood only those committed during the very celebration of Baptism, not those which, having been committed beforehand, remain habitually. For the latter, as we have said, are matter to be destroyed by Baptism when they are retracted. The former are divided into those improperly accompanying Baptism, namely those committed during the celebration itself, that is, during the application of the matter and form, but before the instant (whatever that instant may be) in which the sacrament is understood formally to be completed and to operate; and those properly accompanying Baptism, which are committed at the very instant of time in which the sacrament is completed.

[135] Cf. Suárez, In III, disputation 28, section 5; Vázquez, disputations 159 ff.; Lugo, disputation 16, section 1; Salmanticenses, disputation 2, doubt 2.

These, moreover, are divided into the very SIN OF DISSIMULATION, consisting in the sacrilegious reception of Baptism, or in the fact that someone knowingly and willingly receives Baptism in a state of sin and without attrition (the dissimulation may be founded either upon previous sins which have not been retracted or upon sins committed at the very instant of Baptism itself); and other sins of any specific kind (for example, theft or impurity) which constitute the sin of dissimulation itself.

Hence three questions are asked in this article:

1. Whether sins improperly accompanying Baptism (that is, those which, at least insofar as they precede the instant at which Baptism is completed, are committed before it) are matter of Penance and not of Baptism.

2. Whether sins properly accompanying Baptism (that is, those committed at the very instant of Baptism, not before or after it), even apart from the sin of dissimulation itself, are matter of Penance.

3. Whether at least the sin of dissimulation itself is matter of Penance.

St. Thomas resolves these questions concisely but clearly in question 69, article 10, replies to the second and third objections, cited above (pp. 239 ff.). Modern authors scarcely touch upon them, although they contribute not a little to a proper and distinct understanding of the nature of each of the two sacraments of the dead.

THE NEGATIVE AND AFFIRMATIVE POSITIONS

As to the first question, there appears to be no controversy among theologians. For although the question is not proposed distinctly by all, so that confusion sometimes arises between sins improperly and properly accompanying Baptism, all appear to teach that sins improperly accompanying Baptism, since they precede Baptism formally received, are matter not of Penance but of Baptism itself.

As to the second and third questions, concerning sins properly accompanying Baptism, there is, principally among Thomists, a disagreement among theologians. It concerns sins other than dissimulation itself, which some attribute to Baptism and others to Penance. For that the sin of dissimulation itself is matter of Penance is most commonly assumed without controversy by modern theologians; it is also very commonly admitted by earlier writers, so that several call it a certain doctrine, and Suárez affirms that no one can deny it.

The opinions of theologians, therefore, concerning sins properly accompanying Baptism may be reduced to three.

The first opinion teaches that all such sins, both the sin of dissimulation and the others, are matter of Baptism alone, because they are not postbaptismal sins. Lugo admits that this opinion had once appeared to him more probable, and reports Ferrariense and Paludanus as probable defenders of it. Yet this opinion has been abandoned by almost everyone, and may be considered at least extrinsically improbable and deserving of rejection, insofar as it teaches that the sin of dissimulation is not matter of Penance.

St. Alphonsus himself, however, appears indirectly to favour it when he writes: "It is disputed ... whether mortal sins committed in the very reception of Baptism are matter of this sacrament. Very commonly it is affirmed ... on the authority of St. Thomas [q. 69, a. 10] and St. Augustine ... who says: 'Then Baptism begins to avail unto salvation when that dissimulation has yielded to true confession.' The reason is that these sins, although simultaneous in time with Baptism, are nevertheless posterior to it in the order of nature." But these authorities do not seem to establish what the reason he adduces requires. At most they appear to prove the point concerning sins which a person receiving Baptism might wish to commit after Baptism, but not concerning the sin of dissimulation itself, namely when he receives Baptism while in mortal sin and without sorrow. Nor does St. Thomas say that the sin of dissimulation is matter of the sacrament of Penance; he says only that it is removed through penance. By penance, however, the Doctor assuredly does not mean

confession but sorrow for sin. Nor does the text of St. Augustine present an obstacle, for, as the Gloss explains, by 'true confession' he means 'contrition of heart.'"[136]

[136] St. Alphonsus, Theologia Moralis, ed. L. Gaudé, vol. 3, book 6, tract 4, chapter 1, doubt 1, no. 427, Rome, 1909, p. 421 ff.

The second opinion, on the contrary, maintains that all of them are matter of Penance alone, on the ground that they are sins of a person already baptized. This is taught by several theologians, including Thomists, and is defended at length by Lugo.

The third and more common opinion distinguishes: the sin of dissimulation is matter of Penance, because, being sacrilege or profanation of the sacrament, it follows Baptism formally; but the other sins are matter of Baptism alone, because they are not posterior to Baptism. Thus, after St. Thomas, Cajetan (on q. 69, a. 10), Soto (on IV Sentences, distinction 6, q. 1, a. 8), the Salmanticenses (On Penance, disputation 2, doubt 2, nos. 54 ff.), more commonly the other Thomists, and likewise Suárez (on III, disputation 28, section 5) and Vázquez (disputation 159).

The opinion of Lugo, which he himself sets forth in a rather fluctuating and confused manner, may be reduced to the following points.

First, he says that this question is not practical: "I say, first, that this question is in no way practical, but entirely speculative. For in practice it is certain that all those sins must be disclosed in a subsequent confession, as necessary matter; for no one can know whether some sin lasted throughout that entire preceding period, even to the final instant terminating Baptism, or only in that instant, and whether it was not continued in any way through some succession of time."[137]

[137] Lugo, Disputationes Scholasticae, vol. 4, De Poenitentia, disputation 16, section 1, no. 2, Paris, 1892, p. 894.

Secondly, with regard to the speculative question, he teaches that the distinction between the sin of dissimulation and the others is inappropriate: "For this difference between sins of that kind does not seem to have a solid foundation; indeed, it may be more doubtful whether the sin of dissimulation [is really matter of Penance] than whether the others are. Moreover, it is proved that the other sins are not to be excluded, if the sin of dissimulation is not excluded, because both the others and dissimulation are sins of a baptized man, a member of the Church already existing within it, and so forth. Therefore, if the sin of dissimulation is subject to the keys of the Church in the sacrament of Penance, the others likewise ought to be subject to the same keys."[138]

[138] Ibid., no. 4, p. 895.

Thirdly, he adds: "Speaking ... absolutely, as to whether sins of that instant, both the sin of dissimulation or the unworthy reception of Baptism and all the others, precisely as they are in that instant, are matter of a subsequent confession: to me the negative position indeed once appeared more probable."[139]

[139] Ibid., no. 10, p. 897.

Fourthly, after rehearsing arguments for that opinion, he concludes: "These arguments, as I have said, formerly inclined me toward that negative side. Nevertheless, I now think that in this matter one ought not to depart from the common affirmative opinion, according to which the sin committed at the instant when the man is already baptized and marked with the character ought to pertain to the sacrament of Penance. This, moreover, we may also infer from the manner of speaking of the

Council of Trent in session XIV, chapter 2, where the Fathers seem to deny to the ministers of the Church the judgment of those sins alone which are outside the Church. ... From these words of Trent we may draw an argument a priori in favour of this common opinion; namely, that such a sin, as committed in that instant, would truly be the sin of a Christian man, marked with the character of Christ, and therefore of a man subject to the Church. Consequently it would fall under the judges of the Church, just as an offence committed in Florentine territory comes under the Florentine judge. This is confirmed because a man can be excommunicated and punished by the Church for a sin committed at that instant; therefore the sins of that instant pertain to the tribunal of the Church."[140]

[140] Ibid., no. 23 ff., p. 901.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion I. Sins accompanying Baptism (that is, sins committed while the matter and form are being applied, but before the final instant of this application) are not matter of Penance but of Baptism, and must therefore be removed through the revival of Baptism.

This is proved.

For these sins precede Baptism itself formally considered as such, and are sins of a man who has not yet become subject to the Church through the imprinting of the character, according to the Thomistic opinion (defended in the treatise On the Sacraments in General, article 10), which teaches that the sacrament formally exists and operates in the final instant terminating its last part.

According to the opinions of other theologians,[141]however, who hold that a sacrament produces its effect and imprints the character at some intermediate instant or period (whether determinate or indeterminate), it must consequently be said that sins preceding the imprinting of the character are matter of Baptism, while those which follow it (even if the sacrament has not yet been completed) are matter of Penance, since they pertain to a man already subject to the Church.

[141] Cf. Lugo, De Sacramentis in genere, disputation 4, section 6; Salmanticenses, De Sacramentis in communi, disputation 4, doubt 5, nos. 80 ff.

And in fact Lugo adopts this explanation, at least as probable. For he teaches[142]that the sacrament attains its completion during the time in which its last syllable is pronounced; and because at the first instant of this time it already begins to be complete and valid, it produces its effect in that very same instant. Hence all sins committed or continued after that instant, during the remainder of the aforesaid time, are matter of Penance, because they follow the imprinting of the character.

[142] Lugo, De Sacramentis in genere, disputation 4, section 6, no. 123; De Poenitentia, disputation 16, section 1, no. 3.

Conclusion II. Even sins properly accompanying Baptism itself formally (that is, sins committed in the very terminating instant in which the sacrament exists and operates) are not matter of Penance, but of Baptism, with the exception of the sin of dissimulation itself. Hence a person who has been baptized with dissimulation is not obliged to accuse himself of these sins in confession; it suffices that he accuse himself of the sin of dissimulation, saying that he received Baptism in a state of sin and with a lack of attrition.

This is proved.

FIRST REASON. It is derived from the Council of Trent (cited in article 7, p. 214 ff.), which teaches that the matter of the sacrament of Penance and of confession consists of sins committed after Baptism, without making any mention of accompanying sins. Now the very fact that the Council assigns postbaptismal sins as the matter of Penance is rightly understood to exclude all other sins, including those accompanying Baptism; just as the fact that the Council of Florence assigns natural water as the matter of Baptism, and wheat bread and grape wine as the matter of the Eucharist, excludes artificial water, bread not made of wheat, and wine made from apples.

Some object ineptly that the Council of Trent was silent concerning accompanying sins because this very question was disputed among theologians, and the Council did not wish to decide it. For it does not follow that the Council expressed itself inadequately, since the exclusion of the aforesaid sins from the character of matter of Penance follows from its very words.

Moreover, the Council teaches that the Church exercises this sacramental judgment upon no one "who has not first entered into her through the door of Baptism." Now a man sinning in the same instant as Baptism is simultaneous with Baptism, and cannot be said to have first entered the Church through Baptism.

Lugo, however (loc. cit., no. 31), ineptly objects that the Council asserts only that a man cannot be judged by the Church concerning any sin unless he first becomes her subject through Baptism. We reject this interpretation above (p. 232). As for what Lugo positively infers from it, namely that the judgment—and not the sin itself concerning which he is judged—must follow Baptism, it would follow that the Church could judge, through the sacrament of Penance, not only sins accompanying Baptism but also sins preceding it (which would differ from accompanying sins only in the accidental circumstance of time); this, however, Lugo expressly denies with us.

SECOND REASON. It comes from the authority of Augustine and St. Thomas. In the text cited above (p. 239 ff.), the former expressly says that through Baptism, once dissimulation has been removed, whatever sin remains "before Baptism and in Baptism" is forgiven. The latter likewise says that Baptism, upon reviving, removes "the guilt of all sins preceding Baptism, and even of those existing simultaneously with Baptism"; and again that "the effect of Baptism is not to take away future sins, but present or past sins."

THIRD REASON. Sins accompanying Baptism (with the exception of formal dissimulation, for a special reason to be explained below) accompany Baptism under one aspect (insofar as they coexist with it in the same instant), precede it under another (insofar as they stand in relation to it as an evil disposition), and under no aspect follow it. Therefore they are the matter of Baptism, inasmuch as they accompany and precede it (for the power of Baptism extends to whatever is in a man at the moment when it is applied), and in no way the matter of Penance, since they are in no respect subsequent to Baptism.

To see this clearly, recall from philosophy that disposition is of two kinds. One proceeds from the form itself, and is prior to the form in the order of material causality, but posterior in the order of formal causality; the other does not proceed from the form, and is simply and absolutely prior to the form (in the same order of material causality), and in no respect posterior to it. In the latter way, sins accompanying Baptism stand as a disposition in relation to the influence of Baptism (namely, as an evil disposition or impediment restraining that influence), since they dispose one to it (by restraining

it) and do not proceed from it (as something restrained), or, if one prefers, dispose one to the negative influence of an evil will restraining the influence of Baptism, but do not formally proceed from that evil will, in the way that formal dissimulation does. Hence, simply and absolutely, they precede the aforesaid influence and under no aspect follow it, except insofar as they take on the character of formal dissimulation; and precisely under this latter aspect they are not the sins accompanying Baptism simply considered, as will be explained more fully below. Formal dissimulation itself, on the other hand, has the character of disposition in the first way, since it disposes one to an influence which restrains and simultaneously proceeds from that very restraining influence, or from the evil will itself restraining the influence of Baptism. And therefore, as will be explained below, under this aspect dissimulation is matter of the sacrament of Penance.

YOU WILL SAY, FIRST (against the foregoing reason). Sins accompanying Baptism stand as an evil disposition only in relation to the influence of Baptism infusing grace, but not in relation to its influence imprinting the character, as is clear from the fact that the character is in fact imprinted and the sacrament is validly conferred. Now the influence which concerns grace is posterior to that which concerns the character. Therefore, under this aspect, these sins follow upon valid Baptism and consequently are matter of Penance.

REPLY. The ultimate consequence is denied in the first place, absolutely. For even if these sins follow Baptism insofar as it is valid, they remain antecedent in relation to Baptism insofar as it is fruitful; and therefore they would still be matter of Baptism insofar as it is fruitful, and could be expelled through its influence infusing grace.

Furthermore, the major premise of the argument need not be conceded simply. For the influence of Baptism upon the character and upon grace is one and the same influence, having two effects subordinated to one another; the first of them (namely the character) influences the other, at least as an exigitive cause. Hence those sins are in two ways an evil disposition in relation to the character itself: both insofar as they oppose the indivisible influence of Baptism causing either effect, and insofar as they oppose the influence of the character itself upon grace. For they oppose the influence of Baptism causing grace both with and through the character, and in this way they precede Baptism in every respect.

YOU WILL SAY, SECONDLY (against the doctrine itself). Sins accompanying Baptism, precisely because they are such, are committed by a man already existing within the Church, or already baptized. Therefore they belong to the sacrament of Penance.

REPLY. A distinction must be made in the antecedent. Those sins are committed by a man already existing within the Church and already baptized, that is, by one who first exists in the Church and simultaneously exists there and is baptized: granted; by one who existed in the Church and was baptized before committing those sins: denied. For these sins exist simultaneously with Baptism and in no respect follow it, as would nevertheless be required for them to be matter of Penance. Therefore the consequence is denied.

In other words, properly speaking, it is not the baptized man who commits a sin during Baptism; rather, it is the man who commits a sin while being baptized. And since the sacrament is conferred while the sin is committed, it is not therefore simply true that those sins are the sins of a man existing in the Church, because he does not exist in the Church before he commits the sin.

YOU WILL INSIST. Those sins, precisely because they exist in the terminating instant of Baptism, are posterior to Baptism. For in that instant Baptism no longer exists, but has ceased, since Baptism, being a successive entity, is terminated and operates in an instant extrinsic to itself.

REPLY. This terminating instant, in which the sacrament is completed and operates and in which we say that those sins coexist, is not in every respect extrinsic and posterior to the sacrament; rather, it is simply intrinsic to it.

For since the sacrament is a successive entity, and a successive entity is completed when it is true of it that it has changed, this is verified not in the intrinsic instant in which its last part still exists, but in the extrinsic instant in which that part too has passed away. It follows that the sacrament then has its completion (and then operates) when its last part has passed, or in the instant which is extrinsic to all the parts of the sacrament. Nevertheless, since the completion of the sacrament is something belonging to the sacrament itself, this very instant in which it obtains its completion must be called simply intrinsic to it. Such an instant is therefore both extrinsic and intrinsic to the sacrament: extrinsic if the sacrament is taken inadequately for the successive parts of which it consists and by which it is brought into existence, but intrinsic if the sacrament is taken adequately and simply, including its completion, without which the sacrament neither operates nor exists.

Consequently, before this instant, or in the intrinsic instant in which the last part of the sacrament exists, Baptism is not yet present simply and formally; nor can a man be called simply baptized and existing in the Church; nor, finally, can sins committed in the subsequent instant be called simply sins of a man existing in the Church, or formally posterior to Baptism, or in any way matter of Penance.[143]

[143] Cf. Salmanticenses, De Poenit., disp. 2, dub. 2, nn. 88–90, compared with the same authors, De sacr. in comm., disp. 4, dub. 5, nn. 73, 77, 81, 82.

YOU WILL SAY, THIRDLY. Those sins are opposed to Baptism and are stronger than it, since they impede its effect. Therefore they cannot be removed by it. Therefore they are not its matter. Therefore they are matter of Penance.

REPLY. A distinction must be made in the antecedent. Those sins are formally opposed to Baptism by reason of themselves, insofar as they are sins as such (for example, theft or impurity): denied; by reason of the formal dissimulation in which they are included, but from which they are formally distinct: granted. The consequence is likewise to be distinguished.

The opposition of those sins to Baptism does not arise from the sins themselves, either under the generic aspect of sin or under their specific character. This is evident from the fact that precisely the same sins, when they do not strictly accompany Baptism (but precede Baptism or merely accompany its celebration), are remitted through Baptism itself, immediately or after removal of the obstacle (if they were committed together with dissimulation, both formal and material).

Properly speaking, then, the aforesaid opposition arises, in every kind of sin, from the accompanying evil disposition of the subject, or from the lack of attrition, which may be conscious (formal dissimulation), as in the present case, or unconscious (material dissimulation). Hence what is required for Baptism to remove them is only the removal of this lack of attrition; when it has been removed, Baptism itself takes away all present and past sins, either while it exists or when it revives.

Such a defect is removed by eliciting the very act of attrition, either during the actual reception of Baptism or after Baptism has been received with dissimulation (if no other mortal sins than those committed after Baptism have been added to formal dissimulation), or by Penance in reality or in desire (if formal dissimulation or other mortal sins have occurred). Formal dissimulation itself, moreover, is not opposed to Baptism insofar as it is a sin, but insofar as it is dissimulation, that is, an actual will contrary to receiving the sacrament and its effect. The reason it cannot be removed by Baptism, but is matter of Penance, is that it has Baptism itself for its object and is posterior to it; and therefore, conversely, that very will to receive Baptism with dissimulation, which had force before Baptism, is remitted through Baptism itself if it was retracted before Baptism.

YOU WILL INSIST, FIRST. Although accompanying sins do not oppose Baptism under the aspect of sin, they nonetheless oppose it and impede its effect formally insofar as they accompany it, or insofar as they are actually committed in the very instant of Baptism and involve an actual will to sin, with which the infusion of grace is incompatible.

REPLY. Nor in this way are those sins formally opposed to Baptism; rather, formal dissimulation must necessarily be joined to that actual will to sin, namely the will to receive Baptism without a fitting disposition or with that very actual will to sin. Therefore that actual will to sin is indeed an evil disposition in relation to Baptism (and on account of this we have said above that accompanying sins precede Baptism), but it is not a disposition directly opposed to Baptism, as formal dissimulation is, or the will to receive Baptism without a fitting disposition (which therefore follows Baptism). Thus, if by an impossibility it could be separated from that dissimulation, it too could be remitted through Baptism, just as we say it is in fact remitted by Baptism when, converted from an actual into a habitual will, it is separated from dissimulation through the sacrament of Penance.

YOU WILL INSIST, SECONDLY. It was said above that accompanying sins are opposed to Baptism and for this reason in some way precede it; but now it is asserted that they are not opposed to Baptism, and therefore can be removed by it. There appears to be a contradiction here.

REPLY. As was just said, those sins are indeed opposed to Baptism insofar as they involve an actual will to sin, but not directly, as is dissimulation itself, which involves the will to receive Baptism together with the actual will to sin.

YOU WILL INSIST, THIRDLY. Certain other sins, besides dissimulation, by reason of their specific character bear upon Baptism itself and are directly opposed to it. Such are the various ways in which someone may abuse the sacrament in order to achieve wicked ends, for example, in order to commit theft. Therefore at least these sins are matter not of Baptism itself but of Penance.

REPLY. The special opposition of such sins to Baptism, as distinguished from formal dissimulation, certainly multiplies the sins and increases the malice of the unworthy reception of the sacrament. Nevertheless, materially they stand in the same position as the other sins accompanying Baptism, since such opposition, even in these sins, does not formally and directly regard Baptism except by reason of the formal dissimulation founded upon it. From this very fact it is evident that these same sins, if they precede Baptism or coincide with its terminating instant, are matter of Baptism itself, according to the opinion of all.

YOU WILL SAY, FOURTHLY. At the instant of Baptism a person can already be bound to observe the laws of the Church, and consequently can sin against them, for example by eating meat on a Friday.

Therefore at least these sins are remitted by the power of the keys, or by Penance, and not by Baptism, since the aforesaid obligation is founded upon Baptism and therefore precedes the contrary sin.

REPLY. First, the antecedent proposition asserting the existence of such an obligation can be denied. For being baptized is prior to being bound by an obligation, just as being in the Church through Baptism is prior to acting within her and being subject to an obligation. Moreover, even if such an obligation were granted at the instant of Baptism, the person would not simply have been baptized before being bound, but would have been baptized and bound simultaneously, at least in the order of time.

Secondly, even if someone maintains that this simultaneity with Baptism suffices for the existence of an ecclesiastical law, it still does not follow that the aforesaid sins are matter of Penance, since they do not thereby become posterior to Baptism. For the law itself is the matter of the Church's power, but not of her sacramental power.

Thirdly, if someone wishes further to distinguish subtly, within the same instant of time, two instants of reason, in the first of which (by a priority of nature) Baptism exists, and in the other the obligation and the sin, he still does not rightly infer that the sins are matter of Penance. For although they would thus be posterior to Baptism under the aspect of the object of ecclesiastical law, they would nevertheless remain simultaneous with and antecedent to it under the precise aspect of sin, or of an evil will opposed to the infusion of grace through Baptism. Hence three instants of reason would then have to be distinguished: in the first would be understood the sins; in the second, Baptism; and in the third, the law and its object. Thus once again these sins would be matter of the Church's power, but not of her sacramental power.

YOU WILL SAY, FIFTHLY. At least those accompanying sins which, as can readily happen, continue for some instant or brief interval of time after the instant of Baptism are matter of Penance. For the same sin cannot belong to two distinct sacraments, nor can it subsequently, in the justification of someone baptized with dissimulation, be removed through two sacraments.

REPLY. There is no contradiction in these sins belonging to Baptism with respect to their beginning, but to Penance with respect to their continuation and termination. Moreover, in the justification of the person baptized with dissimulation, insofar as those sins are remitted by each sacrament with regard to its own proper matter, each sacrament, through its influence, causes the same indivisible grace by which all the sins, and all the aspects of each sin, are removed.

YOU WILL SAY, SIXTHLY. The sin of formal dissimulation is matter of Penance. Therefore, by parity of reasoning, the other sins accompanying Baptism are also such matter. For dissimulation and the other sins exist in the same instant as Baptism; likewise, they are sins of a man already existing in the Church and already baptized; likewise, they oppose Baptism; likewise, they stand as indispositions to the influence of Baptism; likewise, they are sacrileges or profanations of the sacrament.

REPLY. The consequence is denied. For from what has just been said, and from what is to be said below concerning the sin of dissimulation itself, it is evident that there is a very great disparity between it and the other accompanying sins.

For although all exist simultaneously in the same instant as Baptism, dissimulation alone is posterior by nature, whereas the others are prior by nature. Likewise, although all are sins of one who is already in the Church, dissimulation alone is the sin of a man who first exists in the Church and has already been baptized; the others, by contrast, are sins of a man first existing and being baptized simultaneously. Likewise, although all are opposed to Baptism, dissimulation alone is opposed to it formally, directly, and by reason of its own character; the others are opposed by reason of the dissimulation itself. Likewise, although all are indispositions, dissimulation alone is an indisposition proceeding from the very cause that restrains the influence of Baptism, or from the evil will to receive it without fruit, and consequently it alone has a posteriority in relation to Baptism, by reason of which it is matter of Penance. Finally, although all somehow concur in the sacrilege and profanation of the sacrament, dissimulation alone is a direct and proper sacrilege; the others are neither distinct sacrileges, nor circumstances intrinsically aggravating sacrilege, but only the matter of the single sacrilege of dissimulation.

YOU WILL INSIST. The sacrilegious character of dissimulation is founded upon the other sins accompanying Baptism; but a sin and its cause belong to the same species. Therefore all those sins participate in the species of sacrilege. Again, each of those sins involves an injury to the sacrament and its profanation, and therefore each is a sacrilege. Again, it is more grievous to approach Baptism with several sins than with only one; therefore the accompanying sins participate in the character of sacrilege, at least as circumstances aggravating dissimulation itself, which ought to be submitted in confession to the sacrament of Penance.

REPLY. The sacrilegious character of dissimulation is founded upon the other sins, not as upon a cause exerting a moral influence, but as upon a materially accompanying cause; for it is not founded upon them formally, insofar as they accompany Baptism, nor insofar as they are specifically such sins (for example, theft or impurity), nor insofar as they are more numerous. Rather, sacrilege always belongs to the intention of receiving the sacrament while adhering by an actual will to sin, regardless of whether that will adheres to this sin or that one, or to one sin or several.

Consequently, the character of being accompanying sins, their specific kinds, and their plurality stand materially and concomitantly in relation to the character of sacrilege. This latter is founded formally upon sin indistinctly and in a confused manner; hence no distinction or plurality of sacrileges arises from those factors, nor even any circumstance intrinsically aggravating the sacrilege. Certainly greater malice is present in the man who, having committed several and more serious sins, approaches Baptism with dissimulation, than in one who approaches with dissimulation alone arising from previously committed sins, or who commits fewer and lighter sins during Baptism. But the entire difference arises not from the action but from the agent, who approaches not more unworthily, but as a more unworthy person.

YOU WILL SAY, SEVENTHLY. If it is denied that the other sins accompanying Baptism are matter of Penance, this must all the more be denied of the sin of dissimulation (though scarcely anyone denies the latter).

For the other sins can be reached by the Church's judgment and censures (indeed, some of them can arise from disobedience to an ecclesiastical law, as was said above under the fourth objection, p. 253). But dissimulation cannot fall under ecclesiastical law, since the Church cannot forbid an unworthy reception of Baptism when, before receiving it, a man is not subject to her. If, therefore, the other

sins, which can be reached by the Church's power, are nevertheless not matter of Penance, a fortiori the same must be said of dissimulation, which cannot be reached by that same power.[144]

[144] Lugo invokes this argument a fortiori to prove that a distinction is improperly made between dissimulation and the other sins, all of which, he argues, must be assigned either to Baptism or to Penance (he himself chooses the latter).

REPLY. In the first place, this objection assumes something uncertain: namely, that the other sins can be subject to the Church's power, which seems rather to be denied (as was said in the reply to the fourth objection, p. 253). Secondly, it assumes something else false: namely, that the Church's power cannot reach formal dissimulation. For although the Church cannot command a person to receive Baptism or not to receive it before he is subject to her, she can nevertheless forbid its unworthy reception as such, since this is posterior to Baptism. Thirdly, it does not follow correctly, but passes illegitimately from non-sacramental power to sacramental power. For since these two powers are distinct, it is not contradictory that there should be some reason why the other sins are reached by one power (namely, the non-sacramental) but dissimulation is not; and, conversely, why dissimulation is subject to the other power (namely, the sacramental), to which the other sins are not subject.

YOU WILL SAY, EIGHTHLY. Whatever may be the speculative answer to this question, at least in practice all accompanying sins are matter of Penance, inasmuch as they must be accused individually and specifically in confession, at least as doubtful sins, owing to uncertainty as to whether they endured only during the instant of Baptism or beyond it. For a man cannot know precisely when his deliberate sinful will ceased, nor when Baptism itself was essentially completed and had passed away. This accords with Lugo's opinion.

REPLY. In the first place, if this objection were valid, it could also be urged concerning antecedent sins committed during the administration of Baptism, or even a little beforehand. For it can equally be uncertain whether these sins ceased precisely before the instant in which Baptism was completed. Who, then, would say that these sins are matter of Penance?

Secondly, the metaphysical question concerning the matter of a sacrament (that is, matter removable by the sacrament) must not be confused with the moral question concerning matter that one is obliged to confess (that is, matter to be submitted to the sacrament). For a sin can be matter removable by a sacrament even though one is not bound to submit it to that sacrament —as in the case of venial sins and, in the opinion of several older theologians, doubtful mortal sins which in fact are not sins or are venial sins and which are antecedent to the sacrament. Therefore, even if an obligation to confess sins accompanying Baptism were granted, it would not follow that they are matter of the sacrament (that is, removable by the sacrament), because this obligation would be founded upon the difficulty of discerning whether they had been committed after the sacrament, and upon the supposed necessity of confessing doubtful sins.

Thirdly, even if, with several earlier theologians, a general obligation to confess doubtful sins is admitted, it must be denied that the aforesaid sins are to be accused precisely as they are accompanying sins—that is, with respect to their beginning—but only insofar as they are subsequent, that is, with respect to their continuation. Hence it would be enough for the penitent, for example, to accuse himself of doubtful theft or impurity, without adding that he committed these sins also during Baptism or that they are a continuation of sins accompanying Baptism.

Fourthly, the aforesaid obligation to confess those sins is denied even insofar as they are subsequent to Baptism, precisely because as such they are doubtful sins; and according to the common opinion, at least of more recent theologians, there is no obligation to confess doubtful sins, at least or especially when the doubt concerns the very existence of the sin.

CONCLUSION III

The accompanying sin which is formal dissimulation itself is matter of the sacrament of Penance, but not of Baptism.

This is proved.

FIRST REASON. Formal dissimulation (that is, the will to receive valid Baptism without a proper disposition, or while actually willing to adhere to sin and thus to impede the fruit of Baptism) is directly opposed to the infusion of grace itself through Baptism. Therefore it cannot be removed by the influence of Baptism, which infuses grace. In other words, dissimulation is stronger than the justifying influence of Baptism, since it is able to bind and impede that influence; therefore it cannot be removed through Baptism itself. Consequently, it must be removed through Penance, since there are only two remedies for sins, namely Baptism and Penance.

Nor does it avail to object that this reasoning proves only that dissimulation cannot be removed by Baptism in the very reception of Baptism, but not that it cannot be removed when Baptism revives, after dissimulation has changed from an actual into a habitual and past sin and has been revoked through contrition.

For even after the reception of Baptism, dissimulation retains its proper character and the malice it previously possessed, namely, an intrinsic and direct opposition to the justifying influence of Baptism. It is, in fact, the sin of having voluntarily received the sacrament without fruit; nor can it any longer be revoked by a contrary will to receive the sacrament fruitfully, since the unrepeatable sacrament has already been received without fruit. Hence it irrevocably obstructs the fruitful influence of Baptism.

Herein lies the difference between dissimulation (which accompanies the actual reception of Baptism) and a will to receive Baptism with dissimulation which someone may have had before Baptism and retracted before the concluding instant of the sacrament (and which some improperly call dissimulation). The latter consists entirely in intention and concerns Baptism still to be received; hence it can be revoked by a contrary intention before the reception of Baptism itself and thus be blotted out through Baptism. The former, however, is a sin of the external deed and has for its object Baptism actually received. Consequently it cannot be revoked by a contrary, good reception of Baptism, since Baptism is unrepeatable, and in its revival it exercises no influence other than that previously impeded by the very dissimulation.

Moreover, if dissimulation could be removed by Baptism reviving, contrition on the part of the subject would not be required for this: attrition would suffice of itself, just as for the blotting out of sins committed before Baptism. Yet it seems altogether unfitting that sacrilege or the profanation of a sacrament should be blotted out without contrition (or at least without another sacrament capable of making the attrite contrite). But if contrition is required, dissimulation is matter of Penance: for this

contrition cannot operate in the desire of Baptism, since it is posterior to Baptism, but only in the desire of Penance.

SECOND REASON. Although dissimulation occurs in the same instant as Baptism, like the other accompanying sins, it is nevertheless formally posterior to Baptism by nature; conversely, the other sins (as was said above) are formally prior to Baptism.

For dissimulation is the unworthy reception of Baptism. But the unworthy reception of Baptism is posterior by nature to Baptism itself, because to exist is prior to being received. Likewise (and this comes to the same thing), dissimulation has for its object Baptism unworthily received; but an act is posterior by nature to the object from which it receives its species and to the matter about which it is concerned.

A THIRD REASON, but an inept one, proposed especially or exclusively by some, such as Suárez, Billot (thesis 30), and Merkelbach (no. 436), is that dissimulation is opposed to the infusion of grace but not to the imprinting of the character. From this they conclude that it follows the imprinting of the character and the valid sacrament and is therefore matter of Penance.

Lugo aptly reports this argument (while rightly rejecting it): "Others reply ... that the sin of dissimulation is a sin committed after Baptism; because Baptism produces the character before it produces grace, both because it requires no disposition for producing the character, as it does for grace, and also because the character itself is regarded as, so to speak, at least a moral power ordered to the production of grace. Therefore the obstacle placed against the effect of grace by the sin of actual dissimulation presupposes a man who already has the character and has been baptized; and accordingly that sin is posterior to Baptism. Thus, in substance, Father Suárez, in the cited section 5 after the third conclusion, together with others."[145]

[145] Disputationes scholasticae, vol. 4, De Poenitentia, disputation 16, section 1, no. 14 (Paris, 1892), p. 898.

If this argument were valid, it would follow that not only dissimulation but also the other sins accompanying Baptism are matter of Penance, since all bear the same relation to the infusion of grace and the imprinting of the character. And certain opponents have indeed tried to draw precisely this conclusion from that argument, as we saw above (Objection I, p. 249). But its ineptitude for establishing either inference was shown there (Reply). Hence Lugo himself rejects it, although it could easily have supplied him with an argument to establish both doctrines, namely, that dissimulation and the other accompanying sins are matter of Penance.

YOU WILL SAY, FIRST. The sin of dissimulation consists in the will to receive Baptism without a proper disposition, and all its malice is contained in this interior will, which precedes Baptism and to which the performance of the external deed, or the reception of Baptism itself, adds nothing formally. Therefore the sin of dissimulation is remitted through Baptism itself, since it precedes Baptism.

REPLY. The sin of dissimulation is the very act of externally receiving the sacrament insofar as it is voluntary; accordingly, as such it is posterior to Baptism and is remitted through Penance. But the interior act of willing to receive the sacrament without a proper disposition, if, as often happens, it also precedes the reception of the sacrament or the instant of Baptism, is, as such, a prior sin of the heart. It is remitted by Baptism itself, either in its reception, if it is retracted before the concluding instant of the sacrament, or in its revival.

YOU WILL SAY, SECONDLY. The other sins accompanying Baptism are not matter of Penance but of Baptism itself. Therefore, by parity of reasoning, and indeed all the more strongly, so is the sin of dissimulation itself.

REPLY. Both arguments, that from parity and that a fortiori, were rejected above (replies to Objections V and VI, pp. 253 ff.).

Chapter III. On the Virtue of Penance

CHAPTER III

ON THE VIRTUE OF PENANCE

SUBJECT

As was stated in the introduction to the preceding chapter, after a general consideration of the physical essence of this sacrament, there follows a distinct exposition of its parts, namely, the three acts of the penitent, which are integral parts of its matter, and the absolution of the priest, which is the very form of the sacrament. Now the acts of the penitent proceed from the virtue of Penance: contrition formally and principally, but confession and satisfaction consequently and secondarily. Hence it is fitting, at this point, following the method of St. Thomas himself, to set forth the treatment of the virtue of Penance, by which the very essence of the sacrament, and especially its matter, is animated and informed. The appropriateness of this method is undervalued by certain modern authors, as was said in the introduction to this treatise (p. 40).

At the threshold of this disputation it will be helpful briefly to recall the AGREEMENTS AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PENANCE AS A VIRTUE AND PENANCE AS A SACRAMENT.

WITH RESPECT TO THE NAME, they agree in employing the same word as their principal and most common designation; but they differ in that the designation is transferred from the virtue to the sacrament.

WITH RESPECT TO EXISTENCE, they agree in that, at least under the evangelical law (indeed, according to Thomistic doctrine, in the state of restoration, or under the threefold state of the law of nature, the Mosaic law, and the evangelical law), they proceed side by side, so that neither ever existed without the other; indeed, each has always in some way been contained within the other, the virtue vivifying the sacrament, and the sacrament making the virtue fruitful through the desire for it. But they differ in that the virtue, though not the sacrament, exists before Baptism; and the virtue preceded the sacrament in the earthly paradise and will outlast it in the heavenly paradise.

WITH RESPECT TO ESSENCE, they agree in that both consist in a means of justification and in human acts; likewise, in that one is in some manner contained in the other. But they differ in that the virtue is a habit and an interior act, as well as a disposition for justification, whereas the sacrament is a sensible act and an instrument. Likewise, the virtue belongs to the essence of the sacrament, whereas the desire for the sacrament is only a condition of the efficacy of the virtue.

WITH RESPECT TO EFFICACY, they agree in that each influences justification and does so with the concurrence of the other: the virtue supplies matter to the sacrament, and the sacrament supplies the virtue with the desire for it through which the virtue operates. But they differ in that the sacrament

exercises an efficient influence ex opere operato, whereas the virtue exercises a dispositive influence ex opere operantis. Likewise, the sacrament always operates, whereas the virtue—or rather the act of attrition—is ineffectual for justification without the sacrament itself.

WITH RESPECT TO NECESSITY, they agree in that each is the second plank of salvation, both for all men after the fall of Adam and for individual baptized persons after the loss of regeneration. But they differ in that each is more necessary than the other in a different respect. For, on the one hand, no one is justified without the virtue, although one can be justified without having received the sacrament in reality; and, on the other hand, without the sacrament in desire, not even the virtue can justify.

WITH RESPECT TO THE OBJECT OR MATTER, they agree in regarding sins; but differ as to the kind of sins, since the sacrament regards only sins committed after Baptism.

WITH RESPECT TO THE SUBJECT, they agree in that both are found only in a sinner or in one capable of sinning. But they differ in that the sacrament can be administered only to a subject who has been a sinner, and indeed after Baptism; whereas the virtue exists in every subject in whom the capacity to sin has existed or exists, as in Adam, an unbaptized man, a baptized infant, and the blessed.

WITH RESPECT TO THE MINISTER, they agree in that a man is not sufficient unto himself but requires the influence of another concurrent cause. But they differ in that the virtue requires only the concurrence of God assisting, whereas the sacrament requires also the concurrence of another man ministering.

DIVISION

We divide the matter of this chapter according to the four causes of the virtue of Penance, adding a discussion of some of its properties. The final cause, however, will be considered incompletely, or only with respect to the influence of Penance. For the intrinsic end of this virtue, which is justification or the remission of sins (divine peace, or appeasement, or reconciliation, being its extrinsic end), can be considered in two ways: either with respect to the influence of the virtue in removing sins, or with respect to the effect itself, namely, the actual taking away of sins. But under this second consideration, the end of the virtue is more suitably treated in Chapter VIII, where the effect of the sacrament of Penance is discussed, which almost coincides with the effect of the virtue itself.

The entire division and order of the articles can therefore be presented in the following outline:

1. Formal cause, or the virtue of Penance itself Its general character It consists in sorrow of soul and detestation — Article 10 It is something moral or praiseworthy — Article 11 Its specific character Habit: It consists in a virtue properly so called, distinct from others — Article 12 Act: It consists formally in contrition, or sorrow of soul and detestation — Article 13 Object: Its formal object consists in painful satisfaction; its material object consists in every personal sin, and in personal sin alone — Article 14 2. Material cause, or subject, both proximate (that is, the will) and remote (that is, a mere human being) — Article 15 3. Efficient cause, or principle Principle of the habit (divine infusion) — Article 16 Principle of the act (fear) — Article 17 4. Final cause, or influence upon the removal of sins — Article 18

5. Properties Excellence in relation to the other virtues — Article 19 Division into penance before Baptism, penance for mortal sins, and penance for venial sins — Article 20 Duration: continuous and until the end of life — Article 21 Necessity of means and of precept — Article 22

St. Thomas treats of the virtue of Penance in question 85; in the following questions, 86–89, he treats of the effect of Penance both as a virtue and as a sacrament.

Article 10. Whether Penance consists in sorrow of soul and detestation of sin, and not merely in a change of purpose

ARTICLE X

WHETHER PENANCE CONSISTS IN SORROW OF SOUL AND DETESTATION OF SIN, AND NOT MERELY IN A CHANGE OF PURPOSE

(St. Thomas, III, q. 85, a. 1; q. 86, a. 2.)

STATE OF THE QUESTION

In this and the four following articles the question concerns the very essence of this virtue, considered in order according to habit, act, and object. Before a determinate consideration of the habit itself, however, the present and the following article address the generic character of Penance and its morality.

The present discussion, therefore, is directed against the Protestants and concerns the general concept of Penance itself, or the very character of that movement or disposition of the soul which a sinful man must have towards God in order to obtain pardon and justification. This question, which has been touched upon more than once above, is appropriately proposed explicitly here as the necessary foundation of the remaining questions.

NEGATIVE PART

THE DOCTRINE OF THE PROTESTANTS holds that penance consists in mere repentance understood as a change of mind, or solely in a "change of mind and purpose" (Luther), or in a "new life" (Luther), or in a change of life or in a purpose of changing one's life, and that its parts are merely terrors of conscience and faith in Christ. This doctrine was set forth more extensively and refuted above (Introduction to the treatise, pp. 5–9; ibid., pp. 35–38; and especially Article III, pp. 156–159 and 162–164), where it was also explained how, on the basis of this prejudice, they consider themselves entitled to interpret arbitrarily both the etymology and the use of the word *penance* in Christian literature (cf. Introduction to the treatise, pp. 5–9).

As regards the present question, the opinion of the innovators can be summarized briefly as follows. Sorrow properly so called, freely elicited, and detestation of sin itself are impossible; for, owing to the total corruption of human nature through original sin, whatever proceeds from that nature is necessary and sinful, and therefore cannot be a free act formally opposed to sin itself. The only free act that man can elicit is an act of faith or confidence in Christ. Consequently, every act of sorrow or detestation proceeding from the sinner can be nothing but a blind torment or terror of conscience in the face of impending damnation; and this consequently regards not sin itself but its effect.

In this sense one must understand the beguiling and not infrequent assertions of the innovators concerning sorrow and weeping over sins (cf. the Helvetic Confession, quoted in Article III, p. 158: "Man [on account of his sins] ... grieves from the heart and ... deplores them before God ... and execrates them with indignation"). A typical example is Chemnitz. In his Examination of the Decree of the Council of Trent, while claiming to agree with the Tridentine doctrine of contrition and interpreting it as "sorrow of conscience, grievously sorrowing that one has sinned and offended God by one's sins" (On Contrition, 6, § 2), he adds that this contrition "is not a work of free will" (ibid., 3) and that it "is nothing else than our acknowledging, feeling, and confessing that, on account of our sins, we are held bound by the chains of divine judgment to eternal damnation" (ibid., 4).

Among RATIONALISTS and modern philosophers, some, denying freedom, consequently deny sin and penance as well, or relegate them among the fictions of the mind. Others, more numerous, denying supernatural life and even the existence of God and of His law, conceive sin as a mere deviation from a certain moral rectitude and consequently teach that penance is nothing more than a return to that rectitude, or a certain change of purpose and of the actions of life.[146]

[146] On the concept of penance among modern non-Catholics, compare the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, article "Repentance" (Samuel McComb), p. 733.

AFFIRMATIVE PART

THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE, WHICH IS OF FAITH, is established from the constant tradition and the magisterium of the Church, especially from the Council of Trent:

Session 6, chapter 6: "They [sinners] are disposed ... for justice itself, when [after conceiving movements of faith, fear, hope, and initial love] ... they are consequently moved against sins by a certain hatred and detestation, that is, by ... penance" (Denz. 798).

Ibid., canon 8: "We have recourse to the mercy of God by grieving over our sins" (Denz. 818).

Session 14, chapter 3: quoted in Article III, p. 160.

Ibid., canon 4: cf. ibid.

Ibid., chapter 4: "Contrition, which holds first place among the aforesaid acts of the penitent, is sorrow of soul and detestation of sin committed, together with the purpose of not sinning henceforth. This movement of contrition has at all times been necessary for obtaining pardon of sins; and in a man who has fallen after Baptism it then prepares for the remission of sins, if it is joined with confidence in divine mercy and with the desire to accomplish the other things required for the right reception of this sacrament. The holy Synod therefore declares that this contrition contains not only a cessation from sin and the purpose and beginning of a new life, but also hatred of the old life, according to the words: 'Cast away from you all your iniquities in which you have transgressed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit' [Ezek. 18:31]. And indeed, whoever considers those cries of the saints: 'Against thee only have I sinned, and have done evil before thee' [Ps. 50:6]; 'I have laboured in my groaning; every night I will wash my bed' [Ps. 6:7]; 'I will recall to thee all my years in the bitterness of my soul' [Isa. 38:15], and others of this kind, will readily understand that they flowed from a certain vehement hatred of their former life and from an immense detestation of sins" (Denz. 897).

Ibid., canon 5: "If anyone shall say that this contrition, which is prepared by the examination, recollection, and detestation of sins, whereby a man calls to mind his years in the bitterness of his soul [Isa. 38:15], weighing the gravity, multitude, and foulness of his sins, the loss of eternal blessedness, and the incurring of eternal damnation, together with a purpose of a better life, is not true and profitable sorrow, nor prepares for grace, but makes a man a hypocrite and a greater sinner; or, finally, that this is a forced sorrow and not a free and voluntary one: let him be anathema" (Denz. 915).

Leo X condemned the following propositions of Luther: proposition 5, quoted in Article III, p. 159; proposition 6: "Contrition which is prepared by the examination, recollection, and detestation of sins, whereby a man calls to mind his years in the bitterness of his soul, weighing the gravity, multitude, and foulness of his sins, the loss of eternal blessedness, and the incurring of eternal damnation—this contrition makes a man a hypocrite, indeed, a greater sinner" (Denz. 746); proposition 7, quoted in Article III, p. 159.

The Catechism of the Council of Trent, part II, chapter 5, question 4, says: "First of all the faithful are to be admonished and exhorted to strive, with every effort and zeal, for that inward penance of the soul which we call a virtue; for without it, what is outwardly employed will profit very little. Inward penance is that by which we turn to God from our hearts and detest and hate the crimes committed by us; and at the same time it is our fixed and deliberate purpose to amend our evil manner of life and corrupted morals, not without hope of obtaining pardon from the mercy of God. This is accompanied by sorrow and sadness, which is a disturbance and affection and is called a passion by many, being joined, as it were, as a companion to the detestation of sins. For this reason, among many of the holy Fathers, the definition of penance is expressed through this kind of anguish of soul."

CONCLUSION

Penance consists essentially and principally in sorrow of soul itself and detestation of sin, and not merely in a change of mind or of life.

PROOF I. From Scripture and Tradition

As is evident from the Introduction to the treatise (pp. 4–10), the very words by which the disposition required of the sinner for justification is designated—namely, *noham*, μετάνοια, penance, laborious baptism, the washing of tears—directly or indirectly convey sorrow and detestation of sin.

Moreover, such a disposition is often described explicitly as sorrow and detestation:

Compare, first of all, Ezek. 18:31; Ps. 50:6; Ps. 6:7; and Isa. 38:15, cited from the Council of Trent, session 14, chapter 4, above. Likewise:

Job 42:6: "Therefore I reprehend myself, and do penance in dust and ashes."

Ps. 50:19: "A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit; a contrite and humbled heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Baruch 2:18: "The soul that is sorrowful for the greatness of its evil, and walks bowed and feeble, with failing eyes, and the hungry soul, gives glory and justice to thee, O Lord."

Dan. 3:38 ff.: "And at this time there is neither ... prophet, nor holocaust, nor sacrifice ... that we might find thy mercy. But may we be received with a contrite heart and a spirit of humility."

Joel 2:12 ff.: "Now therefore, says the Lord, be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting and in weeping and in mourning. And rend your hearts and not your garments, and be converted to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy, and ready to relent concerning evil."

2 Cor. 7:10: "For the sorrow which is according to God works penance unto steadfast salvation; but the sorrow of the world works death."

As regards the FATHERS, compare the texts quoted in Article I from Hermas (p. 95), Tertullian (pp. 101, 104), Cyprian (pp. 113, 114), Pacian (p. 116), Jerome (p. 119), Augustine (p. 120), Innocent I (p. 122), and Gregory the Great (p. 123); but especially the Fathers' direct definitions or descriptions of Penance and of the act of contrition, several of which are reported in the Introduction to the treatise (p. 10), in Article XIII (p. 352), and in Article XIV (p. 382 ff.).

Augustine, in Sermon 351 (cited on p. 10), explicitly rejects the opinion of the Protestants.

St. Thomas aptly summarizes the doctrine of Tradition in III, q. 85, a. 1, taking the words of Gregory the Great (quoted on p. 10: "To do penance ... is to bewail the evils one has committed") and shaping them into this definition: "To repent is to grieve over something previously done by oneself."

PROOF II. From Reason

According to the frequent assertions of Sacred Scripture, which the innovators themselves do not dispute, Penance is a certain disposition towards justification, such that God remits sins to sinners who repent in a fitting manner. But a disposition towards justification, by which sin is expelled, cannot exist without detestation of and sorrow for sin. Therefore, without these there can be no true Penance, nor can Penance consist merely in a change of mind or of life.

IN PROOF OF THE MINOR PREMISE: First, one contrary is expelled by its contrary. But sin consists in a voluntary turning towards created good and an aversion from God, or in the unlawful love and enjoyment of a good. Hence it cannot be expelled except by a voluntary turning away from the created good and a turning towards God, or by hatred of and sorrow over the unlawful good. This is confirmed by the very custom of men, since no one, through natural love, forgives an offense committed against himself unless he detects in the offender definite signs of that inward detestation and sorrow, of which God alone is the knower and examiner.

Furthermore, an offense (in which sin consists) is remitted through grace, or the benevolent will of the person offended; for on this account someone is said to have offended another, because that other excludes him from his favor; and consequently someone is said to have remitted an offense against another because he again admits that person into his favor, or under the influence of his good will. Now the grace of God, or the good will and love of God, produces goodness in the man who is pleasing to Him; it does not find or presuppose that goodness, as human favor and love do, since it is the cause of every created good. Therefore, God cannot be said to remit the offense of sin to anyone except through the reception of a divine gift or good quality by which that person becomes pleasing to God, and consequently through the removal of the evil disposition of the will by which the person was displeasing to God and offended Him. But, as was said above, that evil disposition consists in

turning towards an unlawful good and in loving and enjoying it. Therefore, sin cannot be remitted to anyone unless the turning towards an unlawful good is removed, which takes place through detestation of and sorrow for sin.

TO THE POINT, ST. THOMAS, III, q. 86, a. 2: "It is impossible for an actual mortal sin to be remitted without penance [that is, without true detestation of and sorrow for sin], speaking of penance insofar as it is a virtue. For since sin is an offense against God, He remits sin in the same way as He remits an offense committed against Himself. Now an offense is directly opposed to grace; for a person is said to be offended by another because he repels him from his favor. But, as was established in the Second Part (I–II, q. 110, a. 1), this is the difference between God's favor and man's favor: that man's favor does not cause, but presupposes, real or apparent goodness in the person favored; whereas God's favor causes goodness in the person favored, because the good will of God, which is signified by the name *grace*, is the cause of every created good. Hence it can happen that a man remits an offense by which he has been offended by another without any change in his will; but it cannot happen that God remits an offense against anyone without a change in that person's will."

"Now the offense of mortal sin arises from this, that the will of man is turned away from God through a turning towards some changeable good. Hence, for the remission of the divine offense, it is required that the will of man be so changed that it turns towards God with detestation of the aforesaid turning and with a purpose of amendment; and this belongs to the nature of Penance insofar as it is a virtue. And therefore it is impossible that anyone's sin should be remitted without Penance insofar as it is a virtue."

Nevertheless, this CATHOLIC CONCEPTION OF PENANCE does not exclude a change of purpose and a resolution of new life. Rather, these are necessarily included in the very concept of true sorrow, as is expressly taught by the Council of Trent (session 14, chapter 4 and canon 5, quoted above) and as will be explained below in Article XIII, where the essence of the act of contrition is discussed. The Protestant conception of Penance, however, collapses upon its own principles and explanations, as was shown in Article III (pp. 162–164).

Article 11. Whether Penance is a virtue, or something morally good and praiseworthy

ARTICLE XI

WHETHER PENANCE IS A VIRTUE, OR SOMETHING MORALLY PRAISEWORTHY

(St. Thomas, III, q. 85, a. 1.)

STATE OF THE QUESTION

Before we proceed to the scholastic question concerning the specific nature of Penance, one point remains to be disputed with the same Protestants and Rationalists concerning the indeterminate notion of virtue itself: namely, whether Penance, understood in the Catholic sense established above as sorrow for sin, is something belonging to virtue, or something moral, and not rather something immoral or amoral.

NEGATIVE PART

THE PROTESTANTS here again disagree sharply, teaching that Penance, as it is ineptly defined by Catholics—namely, sorrow and detestation of sin ordered to justification—is not a virtue or something morally good, but something *amoral* in itself and *immoral* according to the intention of Catholics, who imagine or presume that they can elicit that act. All this follows from the Protestant notion of Penance set forth in the preceding article.

First, they say that sorrow for sin is in itself *amoral*. For:

1. Such sorrow, even if possible, would be a wholly futile and foolish attempt to remove sins or to make what has been done undone. But what is foolish is not moral.

2. Such sorrow is *impossible* (and therefore amoral), because, owing to the corruption of nature, man cannot elicit a free act by which he formally opposes sin; rather, he can conceive only sorrow concerning the effect of sin, or fear of damnation and terror of conscience. Thus sorrow for sin, in which Catholics say Penance consists, is either nothing at all or is the aforesaid fear of damnation itself.

3. But this fear is not moral, since it is not free.

Secondly and consequently, they say that sorrow for sin as a cause of justification is *immoral*, according to the intention of Catholics who devise or presume to elicit it. For:

1. Such sorrow involves *presumption*, because a human act, rather than confidence in Christ, is elevated to the status of a cause of justification and satisfaction for sin.

2. Such sorrow, since it is in reality nothing but the aforesaid fear of damnation, is opposed to the evangelical spirit, which is a spirit of gentleness and liberty.

3. To say that this fear, which is not a free act, avails before God unto justification is an *immoral doctrine*, both speculatively and in itself, since it omits the merit and acceptability arising from freedom of action; and in its effects, since it deceives people, who are thereby led to place hope of salvation in their own powers, and makes them hypocrites and greater sinners, insofar as they are convinced they have been justified while they discover themselves still burdened with sins (cf. Luther's proposition 6, condemned by Leo X, and the Council of Trent, session 14, canon 5, cited in the preceding article, p. 264 ff.).

The *Rationalists* and modern non-Catholic philosophers mentioned in the preceding article reduce sorrow for sin to a certain instinctive passion or a certain feeling of shame. For that reason it is *amoral*, or devoid of every moral value; indeed, since it brings about a certain weakening of the soul and, by depressing man, draws him away from good works, it is to be despised as irrational and incongruous, and in this sense *immoral*.

AFFIRMATIVE PART

THEOLOGICAL NOTE

The affirmative doctrine has been solemnly and expressly defined by the Council of Trent, session 14, canon 5, cited in the preceding article (p. 264 ff.; cf. chapter 4), and by Leo X, in condemning

Luther's proposition 6, cited in the same place.

CONCLUSION

Penance is a virtue, or something moral and praiseworthy, and not something immoral or amoral.

PROOF I. From Scripture, Which Commends and Indeed Commands Penance

The commendation of Penance is exhibited in countless passages, especially those cited in the preceding article (p. 265 ff.).

Furthermore, the command to do penance frequently and explicitly recurs in Sacred Scripture:

Ecclus. 2:20, 22: "They who fear the Lord will prepare their hearts, and in His sight will sanctify their souls ... saying: If we have not done penance, we shall fall into the hands of the Lord."

Ezekiel, describing penance as a "new heart and a new spirit" (18:31; cited on p. 264), commands: "Be converted, and do penance for all your iniquities" (18:30).

Matt. 4:17: "Do penance; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Luke 3:8: "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of penance."

Luke 13:3: "Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish."

Acts 2:38: "Do penance, and be baptized every one of you."

Now whatever God commends, and still more whatever He commands, is moral, praiseworthy, and virtuous. For, as St. Thomas argues here in the *Sed contra*, "the precepts of the law concern acts of virtue, because the legislator intends to make the citizens virtuous," as is said in *Ethics*, II, 1. But the precept of the divine law concerns Penance, according to the words of Matthew 4:17, "Do penance," etc. Therefore Penance is a virtue.

So evident is this reasoning that Tertullian considers it wholly foolish and impertinent to dispute the matter: "We insist on this one point: that what God has commanded is good and excellent. I think it audacious to dispute about a divine precept's goodness. For we ought not to obey merely because it is good, but because God has commanded it. In offering obedience, the majesty of divine power takes precedence; the authority of the one commanding comes before the advantage of the one serving. Is it good to repent, or is it not? Why do you ponder? God commands it. Yet He does not merely command, but even exhorts. He invites [Ezek. 33:11] by offering salvation as a reward; even when He swears, saying 'As I live,' He desires to be believed. O blessed are we for whose sake God swears! O most miserable, if we do not believe the Lord even when He swears! What therefore God commends so greatly, and even attests by a human manner of swearing, we should surely undertake and preserve with the greatest seriousness, so that, remaining in the assurance of divine grace, we may also persevere in its fruit and advantage" (*De paenitentia*, 4; PL 1, 1344).

PROOF II. From the Very Nature of Morality

Morality is the conformity of an act with right reason, as is evident from philosophy and indeed from common understanding. Now to repent, as it is understood in Catholic doctrine, is an act conformable to right reason. For love and hatred, pursuit and flight, are correlative and, as it were, two aspects of the same appetitive tendency; and the same reason which makes love and pursuit of justice reasonable also makes hatred and flight from injustice—which are found in Penance, or

sorrow for sin—conformable to right reason. Likewise, since the reasons of opposites are contrary, if the adherence of the will to sin is evil, the will's resistance to sin, which belongs to the nature of Penance, is good.

We deliberately said "to repent as it is understood in Catholic doctrine"; for not every sorrow over a deed is necessarily conformable to right reason, as is evident in the immoderate sorrow of despair or in sorrow lacking the purpose of amendment. Rather, only true sorrow for sins, that is, *moderate sorrow over sins with the intention of removing them*, is conformable to right reason. In this are included the three things from which the morality of an act results: its object, manner, and end.

St. Thomas speaks to the point: "It belongs to right reason that someone should grieve for what ought to be grieved over, and in the manner and for the end in which it ought to be grieved over. This is observed in the penance of which we are now speaking; for the penitent assumes moderate sorrow for past sins, with the intention of removing them. Hence it is evident that the penance of which we are now speaking is either a virtue or an act of virtue" (in the body of the article).

The reasoning adduced, founded upon the very first principles of reason, is so obvious not only to the common sense of peoples that Augustine even calls it "the very voice of nature," writing: "That, as Scripture relates, and as the Manichees themselves [forerunners of the Protestants] not only acknowledge but also command, it is useful to repent of sin, is manifest. Why then do I gather into this matter testimonies from the divine Scriptures, which are everywhere diffused? This too is the voice of nature: it has left no one so foolish as to whom knowledge of this matter is wanting, unless he is wholly insensible. Someone may be able to say that he does not sin; but he cannot say that, if he sins, he ought not to repent—without uttering a most barbarous madness" (*De duabus animabus contra Manichaeos*, 14, 22; PL 42, 109 ff.).

REPLIES

Objection 1. Sorrow for sins is something *AMORAL*: both because it is impossible, since man, made powerless by original sin, cannot elicit a free act by which he opposes sins but can only undergo the necessary terror of conscience or fear of damnation; and because, even were it granted, it would be a futile and therefore foolish attempt to remove sins, or to make what has been done undone.

Reply. The innovators' principle concerning the impossibility of any free act in man after original sin, except confidence in Christ, is false. Its falsity is also established from the very exception which they invoke: for if man, under divine assistance or in some other way, can elicit a salutary act of confidence in Christ, why can he not, at least with divine assistance, elicit a salutary act of sorrow?

The argument concerning the futile and foolish attempt to remove sins has no bearing upon an act of sorrow. For here there is no absolute willing or an attempt to make what has been not have been; rather, there is formally "displeasure at or disapproval of a past deed, together with the intention of removing [not the sinful deed itself, which is impossible, but] its consequence, namely the offense against God [that is, the guilt of fault] and the liability to punishment."

Thus St. Thomas, here in reply to objection 3, briefly but aptly summarizes and perfects the following answers given in his Commentary on the Sentences:

In IV Sent., dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 6, ad 3: "Although sin is past insofar as it is an act, it nevertheless remains as to its effect, namely the guilt or stain or offense against God. And thus

someone can grieve over sin insofar as it is present; for sorrow is about something present. Or one should say, and better, that although the complete will does not concern impossibilities, nevertheless a certain conditional willing, that is, a conditioned will, does concern them: for a man would wish, if it were possible, that a thing had not been. And according to this he also assumes a certain character of the present, so that concerning those things there can be sorrow, which concerns only things present."

Ibid., dist. 17, q. 2, a. 1, quaestiunc. 1, ad 1: "Sorrow is only about that which is in some way present. Now a past sin, although it is not present, is nevertheless present with respect to some effect of it, or the disposition to sin, or the guilt or stain, or even the loss of time, which can in no way be recovered even after the penance has been performed; or even the loss of the innocence of which it was possible to say, although it can never return: 'My heart has not reproached me in all my life' [Job 27:6]. Or it may be said that a past sin arouses sorrow insofar as it remains present in the memory: for even when we recall past sorrows, we are affected by them as though they were present. It may also be said that, just as memory, which belongs to the intellective part, concerns not only past things but also present things—as was said in Book I [dist. 3, q. 1, a. 4]—whereas the memory belonging to the sensitive part concerns only past things, so sorrow, which is in the intellective appetite, may concern both past and present things, although sorrow in the sensitive part is about present things only, because the intellect abstracts from every difference of time, as from other material conditions which sense regards."

To understand this one should recall St. Thomas's explicit doctrine in I–II, q. 35 ff., concerning sorrow and sadness (which is a species of sorrow, namely interior or rational sorrow). Sorrow is an appetitive movement (in animals as well as in rational beings) arising from "the conjunction of some evil ... and the perception of such a conjunction" (ibid., q. 35, a. 1), so that "an evil conjoined [to the subject] is the cause of sorrow or sadness by way of its object" (q. 36, a. 4), taking "an evil conjoined" to mean "the subject's own evil" (q. 35, a. 8). Thus, when sorrow is said to concern something present, the meaning is that sorrow concerns an evil conjoined (and thus present) to the subject, or something which is the subject's own evil and not merely an extrinsic evil (for an extrinsic evil, properly speaking, can be hated but does not give rise to sorrow). We are speaking, therefore, not of presence *in time* but of the presence of a conjunction perceived through knowledge.

St. Thomas explicitly maintains that sadness or sorrow can concern what is past. To the objection "Sorrow concerns only a present evil; but sadness may concern what is past and future, just as penance is sadness over the past and anxiety over the future; therefore sadness differs entirely from sorrow," he replies: "The external sense perceives only what is present; but the interior cognitive power can perceive what is present, past, and future; and therefore sadness can concern present, past, and future things, whereas bodily pain, which follows the apprehension of the external sense, can concern only something present" (I–II, q. 35, a. 2, obj. 2 and ad 2; cf. his Commentary on the Sentences, IV, dist. 17, q. 2, a. 1, quaestiunc. 1, ad 1, cited above).

Penance, therefore, is sorrow over a past sin, not insofar as the sin is past (for by that passing, or by the presence of time itself, the intellect abstracts from it), but insofar as it is joined to the subject, or insofar as it is that subject's own evil, and in this sense present to him by the presence of conjunction. For although the act of sin has passed and has no further existence, nevertheless it was, and remains objectively an evil of the subject who committed it; consequently, through such

apprehension it can cause a movement of sorrow and displeasure even when all of its effects have been taken away. Accordingly St. Thomas says quite rightly and consistently (here, a. 1, ad 3) that Penance, or sorrow for sin, is "displeasure or disapproval of a past deed."

As for the *second* difficulty, that sorrow over past sin implies "willing what is impossible" and is therefore repugnant, different authors answer differently.

Vázquez (Commentary on the present article of St. Thomas) seems to deny the qualification "absolute," teaching that sorrow for sin is an absolute and unconditional will regarding an impossible thing, that is, the non-occurrence of sin. This follows logically from his peculiar assertion that no act of the will is conditional, but all are absolute.

But this opinion is manifestly false and opposed to the common axiom "The will is not concerned with the simply impossible," which is immediately derived from the very principles of common sense and metaphysics. For what is impossible is not a being; and if it is not a being, it is in no respect good or suitable to appetite, and therefore cannot be an object of appetite. Moreover, the very assertion "There is no conditional act of the will" is opposed to common sense, for it is evident that we truly, though conditionally, desire many things insofar as an object pleases us if certain conditions be posited or removed; and the same follows from philosophical principles, since there are certain beings or conditioned objects which can therefore ground conditional goodness and desirability and specify a conditional appetite of the will.

A few, such as Alexander of Hales (*Summa*, IV, p., q. 54, m. 2, a. 3), distinguish and say that sorrow for a past sin involves a certain will, and that an absolute one, concerning an impossible thing, but not an efficacious will for something impossible in itself (which would certainly be repugnant); rather, a will simply desiring something impossible by accident and on account of a condition, which, they say, is not repugnant. For, they say, it is accidental to a sin that it has occurred and consequently is impossible not to have occurred; hence the will can desire that it had not occurred. In support they cite the sin of the angels, which was an appetite for an impossible thing, namely equality with God.

Nevertheless, even an absolute will of this kind, insofar as it is directed to a past sin, is manifestly impossible and repugnant. For although the passing of a thing, considered with its essence, is accidental to it, since according to many it could individually be reproduced by God, nevertheless, because the thing has in fact occurred, it is in itself impossible that it should not have occurred, so that not even God can absolutely bring it about that what has been should not have been. (For what has in fact been, it is impossible that it should not have been, even if it could have failed to be.) But what is absolutely impossible cannot be the object of any act of the absolute will, as was said against Vázquez.

The example concerning the sin of the angels is beside the point, because it presupposes something false: the angels in no way desired true equality with God, which they knew was impossible; rather, they merely chose as their ultimate end the natural perfection which they could attain by the power of their nature, having rejected the supernatural end which God offered them (cf. I, q. 63, a. 3).

Certain more usual authors say that sorrow for a past sin is indeed a will concerning something impossible, but a *conditional* will, that is, if one wishes, a will for a conditionally possible object; and that this is in no way repugnant. This willing consists in the sinner's being so disposed that he wishes to remove the sin and would wish that it had not occurred, were that possible.

This solution is also given by the younger St. Thomas, in IV Sent., dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 6, ad 3, cited above (p. 272), and dist. 17, q. 2, a. 1, quaestiunc. 1, ad 3, where he says: "Although a complete will cannot concern what is impossible, nevertheless a conditioned will, which is called *velleity*, can concern impossibilities: for even a wise man would wish that what is impossible were possible; and this will suffices to cause sorrow, especially when the impossibility of obtaining what we wish arises from ourselves; and so it is in the case proposed."

Nevertheless, while this opinion is sufficient to answer the adversaries, it still does not exhibit the principal reason for sorrow over sin; for this sorrow principally implies an absolute will repudiating sin, as will be explained below. Consequently the aforesaid conditioned will can be only a consequent and secondary element of sorrow.

Some further add that sorrow for sin does not concern a past and impossible object (except in the conditional manner just explained), but a present and possible one, namely the effects of sin (the guilt of fault, the stain, and the liability to punishment), towards whose destruction and nonexistence the act of the will tends. The younger St. Thomas insists on this answer in both places of the Sentences cited above (p. 272).

Nevertheless, this solution too, even when joined to the preceding one, is incomplete, because it does not refer directly to sin itself considered in itself, with which sorrow is principally concerned.

Hence it must be said that sorrow for sin principally consists in an act of the *absolute will* concerning sin itself, which is in no way an act of willing something impossible; for it does not tend towards sin under the aspect of its existence and pastness, as though it intended that what has been should not have been, but under the aspect of an essence to be detested, namely as an evil conjoined to its subject, as was said above (pp. 273 ff.). From this movement two secondary movements of the will necessarily follow, referred to in the preceding answers: namely, a conditional act concerning the impossible, directed to sin under the aspect of pastness, by desiring that what has happened had not happened if that were possible; and an absolute act concerning the remaining effects of sin, tending towards their destruction. This is the teaching of St. Thomas, concisely expressed in a. 1, ad 3, cited above (p. 272).

Objection 2. Sorrow for sin is something *IMMORAL*, both because it entails *presumption* in setting up a human act as a cause of salvation in place of confidence in Christ; and because it *opposes the evangelical spirit* of gentleness and consolation, since it proceeds from fear and is identified with fear of damnation; and because, as understood by Catholics, it *deceives souls*, making them hypocrites and greater sinners.

Reply. Sorrow for sin does not involve the presumption objected to, both because it is an act not merely human but supernatural and elicited with the assistance of grace, and because it is not properly the cause of salvation but a disposition for justification obtained from God either outside the sacrament or sacramentally; and also because it includes confidence in Christ itself, which, as we shall see in Article XVII, is numbered among the acts necessarily preceding or connected with true supernatural sorrow.

Sorrow for sin is not opposed to the evangelical spirit of gentleness and consolation. For, in the first place, it is not identical with fear, as the innovators falsely suppose, although it may be preceded by servile fear and proceed from filial fear (cf. below, Article XVII); it rather involves only displeasure

and sadness concerning sin, which are quite consistent with the gentleness and hope accompanying salvation, and indeed with joy over that saving sorrow itself; for, as St. Thomas observes, "someone may at the same time be displeased at having sinned, and be pleased that the sin displeases him, with hope of pardon, so that this sadness itself may be matter of joy" (q. 84, a. 9, ad 2). Moreover, fear itself, whether filial or even servile, is so far from being opposed to the evangelical spirit that it is rather another aspect of that divine spirit which Truth itself, from the inexhaustible treasury of Justice and Mercy, pours into the Gospel; as the prophet declares: "I am the mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope" (Ecclus. 24:24). Nor did the Apostle interpret this evangelical spirit otherwise when in one and the same letter he writes, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice" (Phil. 4:4), and "With fear and trembling work out your salvation" (ibid. 2:12).

From these considerations it also appears that sorrow for sin, far from rendering becoming souls hypocritical or greater sinners, disposes them by simplicity and sincerity of heart for true justification.

Objection 3 (according to the mind of Rationalists and non-Catholic philosophers). Sorrow for sin is a certain instinctive feeling of *SHAME* and therefore something in itself amoral, consisting in a psychological weakness which withdraws the soul from doing good, and so something immoral in its effect.

Reply. The nature of Penance and of shame is altogether different, as will be more fully explained in the following article (reply to objection 3). For shame is a sensible passion, or fear of reproach and dishonour, whereas Penance is an act of the rational part, or implies a choice of the will. Moreover, shame concerns a past evil as productive of dishonour, whereas Penance regards it as a fault; nor therefore does shame detest that evil as Penance does. Besides, shame itself, although it is not a virtue, is a praiseworthy act and leads to virtue, by avoiding the evil of which one is ashamed; hence it is not to be called some psychological weakness.

But if the objection is directed against the very sadness which sorrow for sin involves, as weakening the soul and withdrawing it from action, in accordance with Aristotle's saying, "Sadness hinders and destroys action" (*Ethics*, X, 4), and Ecclus. 30:25, "Sadness has killed many, and there is no profit in it," it must be answered that immoderate sadness enfeebles the soul and hinders the very flight from the evil over which one grieves; but moderate sadness according to right reason, such as the sorrow of Penance over sin, impels the soul to flee evil and indeed to work against it.

To the point St. Thomas, I–II, q. 39, a. 3: "Just as ... delight in good makes good to be sought more eagerly, so sadness over evil makes evil to be fled more vehemently." Ibid., ad 2: "Just as anything eligible becomes less eligible on account of sadness, so anything to be fled is made more to be fled on account of sadness; and insofar as this is the case, sadness is useful." Ibid., ad 3: "Sadness concerning an operation impedes the operation; but sadness concerning cessation of an operation makes one operate more eagerly."

Article 12. Whether Penance is a virtue properly so called, special and specifically distinct from the others, as a potential part of commutative justice

ARTICLE XII

WHETHER PENANCE IS A PROPERLY SO-CALLED, SPECIAL VIRTUE, SPECIFICALLY DISTINCT FROM THE OTHERS, AS A POTENTIAL PART OF COMMUTATIVE JUSTICE

(St. Thomas, III, q. 85, aa. 1, 2, 3.)[147]

[147] Cf. In IV Sent., dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1; I–II, q. 64; II–II, qq. 57, 58, 61, 80; Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus in communi; Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus cardinalibus; Cajetan, on q. 85, a. 2; Suárez, disp. 2, sects. 1 and 3; John of St. Thomas, disp. 34, a. 1; Gonet, disp. 2; Lugo, disps. 1 and 2; Salmanticenses, disp. 5, dub. 1–4; Billuart, disp. 2, a. 1; Collet, De Poenitentia, part I, ch. 1; Pesch, props. 5 and 6; Galtier, De Paenitentia, thesis 2.

STATE OF THE QUESTION

The question discussed among Catholic theologians concerns the *specific nature of the virtue of Penance*: namely, whether it is a virtue properly so called, and what kind or species of virtue it is. There are *five definite questions*, contained in the very wording of this article:

1. Whether Penance is a virtue properly so called, in the strict philosophical sense, and not merely a moral and praiseworthy act.

2. Whether it is a special virtue, and not merely a certain general condition common to the virtues.

3. Whether it is a virtue specifically distinct from every other virtue, and therefore not to be identified with charity, justice, religion, or fear.

4. Whether it is a moral, and not a theological, virtue.

5. Whether it belongs to the virtue of justice, as a potential part of commutative justice.

For understanding and resolving these questions, recall what is said in the Moral Part, especially in the *Summa Theologiae*, both concerning the general definition and division of habit and virtue and concerning the proper character of the virtues most intimately connected with Penance, namely charity, religion, and justice. From these, moreover, many matters will become clear in the course of the article itself, as they will be needed to prove or explain the conclusions.

Lugo rightly says, when about to expound the present matter at length (*Disputation* 2, near the beginning): "This question is important and is keenly disputed among our theologians." Billot, however, wrongly passes it by, writing (*On* q. 85, near the beginning): "This controversy belongs rather to the subject of the virtues, where it also seems not to be of such great importance."

AFFIRMATIVE AND NEGATIVE POSITIONS

OPINIONS OF THE THEOLOGIANS

I. WHETHER PENANCE IS A VIRTUE PROPERLY SO CALLED

Concerning the *first question*, namely whether Penance is a virtue properly so called (in the philosophical sense of an operative or elective habit according to right reason), certain ancient doctors denied it. St. Thomas mentions them, without naming them, in his *Commentary on the Fourth Book of the Sentences* (dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 2). They taught that "Penance is indeed a virtue, but not speaking properly, rather in the common way in which all praiseworthy things are called

virtues, even if they are passions," as are modesty (cf. II–II, q. 144, a. 1) and continence (cf. ibid., q. 155, a. 1).

Among later authors, theologians say that Durandus alone adhered to this view (*In IV Sent.*, dist. 14, q. 1), strengthening it with several arguments.

His principal argument is that the act of repenting cannot be the primary act of any virtue: first, because it presupposes the act of vice in the virtuous agent; and, secondly, because it is a negative act (of flight and hatred). Both, he says, are inconsistent with the nature of the principal act of a virtue.

On the contrary, the very common tradition of theologians of every school affirms the doctrine. It is confirmed by the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, which teaches in part II, chapter 5, questions 6 ff.:

"That this interior Penance ... belongs to virtue is sufficiently shown by many precepts handed down concerning Penance. For the law commands only those actions which are undertaken with virtue. Nor can anyone deny that to grieve when, how, and to the extent that one ought is an act of virtue. The virtue of Penance enables this to be done rightly. For it sometimes happens that men feel a smaller sorrow than is proper over the crimes they have committed. Indeed, there are some who, as Solomon has written [Prov. 2:14], rejoice when they have done evil. Others, on the other hand, surrender themselves so completely to grief and sorrow that they even despair of salvation. Cain, who said, 'My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon' [Gen. 4:13], may perhaps seem to have been such a one; and Judas certainly was such, who, driven by repentance, lost his life and soul by hanging himself. Therefore the virtue of Penance helps us to maintain measure in our sorrow.

"But the same may also be gathered from the ends which one who truly repents of sin proposes to himself. His first purpose is that he may abolish sin and wash away every fault and stain of the soul. The second is that he may make satisfaction to God for the crimes committed; this clearly pertains to justice. For although there cannot be a proper relation of justice between God and men, who are separated by so great an interval, nevertheless it is evident that there is a certain justice such as that which exists between a father and his children, a master and his servants. The third is that man may return to the grace of God, whose displeasure and hatred he has incurred through the foulness of sin. All these things sufficiently show that Penance belongs to virtue."

II. WHETHER PENANCE IS A SPECIAL VIRTUE

Concerning the *second question*, namely whether Penance is a *special virtue*, or one particular virtue, the whole company of theologians likewise affirms this with the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* (cited above). Only a few of the more ancient authors, mentioned by St. Thomas (*In IV Sent.*, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 3), deny it, including William of Auxerre (*Summa*, I, 4, tract. 6, q. 3) and Alexander of Hales (*Summa Theologiae*, IV, q. 12, m. 1). They teach that Penance is merely a general condition of all the virtues, in nearly the same way that justice, taken generally for rectitude, and obedience are conditions of all the virtues; and conversely, that injustice and disobedience are general conditions of all sins.

The reason for this view is twofold:

1. The pursuit of good and flight from evil belong to the same virtue; but the pursuit of good belongs to every virtue; therefore the flight from evil, in which Penance consists, belongs to every virtue.

2. Penance regards every sin; but sin extends to the matter of all the virtues.

III. WHETHER PENANCE IS SPECIFICALLY DISTINCT FROM EVERY OTHER VIRTUE

Concerning the *third question*, namely whether Penance is a virtue *specifically distinct* from every other, the older theologians, and the very great majority of the more recent theologians, answer affirmatively.

Here, however, there has not been lacking that "variety of opinions" to which Cajetan bears witness concerning his own time. For several theologians of great name, such as Durandus, Suárez, Contenson, and Cajetan himself, misled by an accidental but striking affinity which Penance bears to several other virtues, taught that it is to be identified with one or another of them, at least as regards its essence and principal act: especially with *charity* (so certain ancients), *justice* (Durandus and Suárez), *religion* (Cajetan), or *filial fear* (Contenson).

These are the *four more noteworthy opinions*, which it will be useful to set out briefly.

First opinion: Penance is identical with charity

The first opinion, held by certain ancient authors whom Alexander of Hales mentions (*Summa*, IV, q. 54, m. 1, a. 2), teaches that Penance is identified with the very virtue of *charity*.

Its reason is that the pursuit of good and the flight from the opposite evil belong to the same virtue, as do love of the object and hatred of its contrary, joy over the former and sorrow over the latter. Hence Penance, or sorrow over sin, is nothing other than charity itself insofar as it grieves over the opposite of its own object, that is, over sin insofar as it is an offense against God.

Second opinion: Penance is identified with commutative justice

The second opinion, of Durandus, Suárez, Coninck, Raynaud, and others, teaches that Penance is identified with the virtue of *justice*, and indeed with commutative justice. But because this position is stated with insufficient precision, it can also be understood in the sense that Penance is not properly identified with commutative justice, but is its species or subjective part, and consequently is distinguished from it as a species from its genus. Therefore, it is better to refer this opinion to the fifth question.

Third opinion: Penance is essentially identified with religion

The third opinion, Cajetan's, which seemed novel to many, and which Dominic Soto nevertheless affirmed in his time to contain nothing that displeased him, teaches that Penance is essentially identified with the virtue of *religion* (although it also involves certain acts belonging to charity and justice).

A twofold reason is offered, one from the subject, the other from the object. Cajetan calls the former "convincing the intellect," and Durandus, Suárez, and Raynaud, among other theologians, employed it in support of their particular views:

1. No virtue presupposes its contrary in its subject. But the act of Penance presupposes its contrary, namely sin. Therefore Penance is not a distinct virtue, but coincides with one of the other virtues. That this virtue is religion is shown by the following reason, drawn from the object.

2. This object—namely an offense to be recompensed by a proper act—does not require a proper and distinct virtue. For another sufficient virtue is found for such recompense, namely religion. The aforesaid recompense consists in rendering to God what is owed on account of an offense; but to render what is owed to God is the object of religion. Nor does it matter that what is at issue is a debt *on account of an offense*: for the special notions of a debt arising from an offense and a debt arising from a benefit agree in the one common notion of a debt owed to God, with which religion is concerned.

Cajetan himself writes to the point (on article 2, Leonine edition, no. I.4–6):

"A great doubt arises ... whether Penance is truly and properly one special virtue distinct from the other virtues. The reason for the doubt is not only the variety of opinions, but because an argument presses on either side. ...

"To me, indeed, it seems that it is not a distinct virtue, because of ... the reasons already adduced[148] from the subject and the object; rather, the act of Penance is an act of religion. To perceive this more clearly, distinguish *two acts of Penance*: one directed to making recompense for the offense, the other to making recompense for the indulgence [of oneself]; for by sinning we both offend God and indulge ourselves more than is right. The first of these, which is principal in Penance, is called *making satisfaction as regards the fault*; the second, *making satisfaction as regards the punishment*. Now, of these acts, in order to ascend from what we observe among men to divine things, the first consists in three things: *displeasure at the offense, confession of the sin, and submission of oneself to the person offended*. For through these three things a man has recourse to another man for pardon; and if by them the offended person is not appeased, no right way remains to obtain reconciliation with him. The second satisfaction consists in undergoing punishment, as is evident.

[148] Namely, especially the two reasons just summarized by us, which we shall cite in Cajetan's own words below in the Response to objections 12 and 13, pp. 317 and 321.

"Ascending from these matters to divine reconciliation, we believe the same three things suffice to call forth divine mercy. Now these require no virtue other than *charity and religion*. For displeasure at an offense against God is an act of charity, whose part it is to rejoice in and take pleasure in the divine good. But confession of sin, not only outward but also inward, is an act of religion, commanded by reason without the intervention of another virtue, whose role it is to declare sin. The submission of oneself to God is likewise an act of religion; nor does the notion of Penance add anything except the cause, namely *on account of an offense*, just as the notion of gratitude adds *on account of a benefit*.

"The remaining act of Penance, namely *making satisfaction as regards the punishment*, can be regarded as an act of religion commanded through the mediation of the virtue of vindicatory justice participated in by the subject, so that the sinner punishes himself as a minister, as it were, of God who exacts punishment. It can also be regarded immediately as an act of religion, insofar as religion itself discharges the punishment owed, so that the satisfaction owed by a son and servant to his Lord and Father may be fulfilled; for religion considers this justice in a qualified sense between man and God, since there cannot be justice in the absolute sense between them. ... Thus Penance coincides wholly or principally with religion, and perhaps with vindicatory or commutative justice as regards a secondary act."

Fourth opinion: Penance is identified with filial fear

The fourth opinion, that of Contenson, is not merely new but altogether singular, since it is maintained by this one theologian alone. It identifies the virtue of Penance with *filial fear*. For he teaches that, when the supernatural acts of faith, servile fear, hope, charity, and filial fear by which the penitent sinner disposes himself for justification are considered, the formal act of Penance proceeds from servile fear as from its first and remote principle, but from filial fear as from its immediate and elicitive principle.

The reason is twofold:

1. To reverence God and to preserve the divine right inviolate, which belongs to fear, pertains to the same formal consideration as repairing the right which has been violated, which belongs to Penance.

2. St. Thomas expressly teaches here, in article 5 (which theologians, surprisingly, have overlooked): "The act of Penance proceeds from servile fear as from the first movement of the affection ordered to this; but from filial fear as from its immediate and proper principle."

IV. WHETHER PENANCE IS A MORAL RATHER THAN A THEOLOGICAL VIRTUE

As to the *fourth question*, namely whether Penance is a *moral virtue*, rather than a theological virtue, so that it should be distinguished in dignity and rank from, and not numbered together with, faith, hope, and charity, there is no theologian worthy of mention who has denied it.

Nevertheless, the argument by which this position might be supported is twofold:

1. A moral virtue does not regard God immediately, as does a theological virtue, but regards a created object; Penance, however, regards God immediately, as offended and to be appeased, as does charity in loving Him.

2. A moral virtue, unlike a theological virtue, consists in a mean; Penance, however, does not consist in a mean, since it is lawful to turn to God with the whole heart, just as it is lawful to love God with the whole heart. Therefore it is not a moral but a theological virtue, as charity itself is.

V. WHETHER PENANCE IS A POTENTIAL PART OF COMMUTATIVE JUSTICE

As to the *fifth and final question*, namely whether Penance is a *potential part of commutative justice*, the Thomists, with St. Thomas, and quite frequently other theologians, especially modern ones, answer affirmatively. A *negative opinion*, however, is defended by certain ancient writers of great name, and is divided into four views, according to the general division of the parts of virtue into potential and subjective parts, and the particular division of the virtue of justice into its subjective parts or species, namely commutative, distributive, and legal justice.

First opinion: Penance does not belong to justice

Lugo in particular advances a radical denial, teaching that Penance in no way belongs to the virtue of justice, either as a subjective part or as a potential part, but rather to the virtue of religion, as a certain potential part of it.

The reason for this view, which Lugo alone explicitly defends, is as follows:

1. Not every sin implies an injury to God in the strict sense, since God does not always demand our works and acts of obedience by right of ownership, but sometimes solely by right of jurisdiction, as superior and lawgiver.

2. Even if every sin implied injury in the proper sense, the reparation owed to God on account of sin would not arise in man from a debt of repairing an injury according to justice. For on the one hand, the sinner cannot render to God that same individual act which he ought to have performed when he sinned; and, on the other, he is not bound to render another act equivalent to it, since this lies entirely within the power of God, who can exact it in innumerable ways from the free choice of man.

3. If Penance belonged to justice, the sinner would be bound to elicit an act of contrition as soon as possible, since an injured right obliges to immediate reparation. It would follow that the sinner was bound to sin again actually until he became contrite.

To this point Lugo says: "On the supposition of this argument [namely, the second argument set out above] ... it will be easy to infer that Penance is not a virtue of justice properly so called, nor even the virtue which more recent writers posited as similar to justice and differing only in that it obliges one to unequal rather than equal satisfaction for an injury. Both opinions, therefore, are refuted. ...

"I infer ... how Penance differs from the virtue of religion: for if religion is taken strictly for the virtue tending solely to worship God on account of His excellence, it differs in every way from the virtue of Penance, whose motive is not to worship God simply on account of His excellence, but to avoid offending Him for the sake of the good of peace with God. But if religion is taken more broadly, Penance may be said to belong partly to religion: for, just as all those virtues which regard a debt and concern other people are called potential parts of justice, so also those virtues which regard some debt of human beings toward God may be called potential parts of religion, not, however, strictly and rigorously."[149] Second opinion: Penance belongs to distributive justice

[149] Disputationes scholasticae, vol. 4, De Poenitentia, disp. 2, sects. 1 and 4, nos. 10 and 57, Paris, 1892, pp. 377 and 393.

The second opinion is that Penance belongs not to *commutative* but to *distributive* justice.

Thus Gabriel Biel, *In IV Sententiarum*, dist. 14, a. 3, dub. 3.

The reason which he gives is that Penance chooses the punishment due and proportionate to the offense against God; and it belongs to distributive justice to choose and determine the proportionate reward or punishment for good or evil acts.

Third opinion: Penance belongs to commutative justice through vindicatory justice

The third opinion is that Penance belongs to commutative justice, not immediately, but through *vindicatory justice*, which is a potential part of commutative justice itself.

In this manner the opinion of Scotus (*In IV Sent.*, dist. 14, q. 2) and of many Scotists seems to be interpreted, as also that of certain Thomists, such as Nugnius and Prado, who teach that Penance is identified with or reduced to vindicatory justice.

And Scotus and the Scotists indeed seem to teach that Penance is a *subjective part*, or species, of vindicatory justice;[150] but if they truly identify Penance with vindicatory justice, or with the genus itself, as certain of their expressions appear to imply, they should rather be placed above under the third question, together with Suárez, Cajetan, and Contenson.

[150] On Scotus: "This act [of Penance], therefore, belongs to punitive justice, which is distinguished from commutative justice, and also from friendship. And perhaps this act is nobler than all acts of justice in common, except the act of rewarding, because that act belongs to the legislator alone, and to no one else except by commission from the judge, as if in his place. But the other acts of exchange and friendship and the like can regularly be performed by any persons. Now an act proper to a more excellent person is, other things being equal, more excellent. Yet the act of rewarding is still more excellent, because, although it has this excellence in common with the other—that it belongs to the prince alone—rewarding has both extremes more noble, namely the merit for which it is done and the reward conferred, and the deserving person on whom it is conferred, which surpass the punishment, the fault, and the guilty person on whom the punishment is inflicted" (Opera omnia, vol. 18, Paris, 1894, p. 60). Hyquaeus follows and explains this opinion in his commentary, saying: "Conclusion: Penance is vindicatory justice, or a species of it; thus in the third conclusion of this section the Doctor says, 'This act, therefore, belongs to punitive justice'" (ibid., p. 63).

The reason for this opinion is that through Penance the sinner, as a minister of God, avenges the injury done to God by assuming punishment for sin (for Scotus holds that only the debt of punishment remains from sin once it has been committed). Hence the notion of vindicatory justice is present; and he thus vindicates so as to restore equality with God (namely, by assuming punishment for the punishment owed), from which arises the notion of strict justice, or of a subjective part—rather than a potential and deficient part—of vindicatory justice.

Nugnius and Prado, however, seem to teach that Penance belongs to vindicatory justice as *its potential part*.

Their reason is that Penance agrees with vindicatory justice in establishing a mean in offenses, insofar as it proportions to them the punishment which is due, yet not to equality. This is confirmed by the authority of St. Thomas here, article 3, *On the Contrary*; *In IV Sent.*, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 4; and especially dist. 15, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 2 (Supplement, q. 12, a. 2), where he expressly says that Penance is in some manner a species of vindicatory justice.

Fourth opinion: Penance is immediately a subjective part of commutative justice

The fourth opinion is that Penance belongs to *commutative justice immediately*, and indeed as a *subjective part*, not merely as a potential part.

In this sense one may interpret favorably the opinion of Durandus (*In IV Sent.*, dist. 14, q. 3), Suárez (*De Poenitentia*, disp. 2, sect. 3; disp. 7, sect. 1; *De religione*, book 3, ch. 7), Coninck (disp. 1, dub. 4), Theophilus Raynaud (dub. 4, § 2; *De virtutibus*, book 4, ch. 4, sect. 4), and others. Yet, as we observed above (p. 281), both from their manner of speaking and from the arguments they advance, they seem rather to teach that Penance is not a subjective part or species of commutative justice but simply coincides with it.

Their reason is that it belongs to commutative justice to render to each his own—that is, to preserve the right of another inviolate and to repair that right when violated. But to repent is to repair an injury against God, or a violation of the divine right. Therefore Penance is commutative justice (or at least its species or subjective part). Nor does it matter that Penance tends to restore not the right of a creature but that of God, or that it cannot restore equality, or that it cannot offer a condign

satisfaction: for these considerations belong to accidental aspects, or regard only some secondary act of Penance.

Concerning Durandus, observe that, as we said above (p. 279), in q. 1 of the same distinction on the *Sentences* he denies that Penance is a virtue properly so called, while here, in q. 2, passing to the opposite extreme, he attributes to Penance the full and perfect character of commutative justice. These statements, setting aside a want of consistency not seldom found in this notable opponent of St. Thomas, can be reconciled charitably by saying that in the first place he considers Penance only according to a certain negative character of its act, namely sorrow and flight, and according to the subject ill-disposed through sin; while in the second place he considers Penance according to its positive character, which is to preserve the divine right inviolate, observing the commandments and making satisfaction for sins.

A similar fluctuation is also found in Suárez. For in one place (disp. 7, sect. 1, no. 17) he says that Penance is a justice unlike and distinct from the justice exercised among men; in another place (disp. 2, sect. 2, no. 4; sect. 3, no. 7) he teaches that Penance is justice properly so called, and therefore elsewhere (*De religione*, book 3, ch. 7) he even defends the principle from which Cajetan infers that Penance is not a distinct virtue but is identified with another virtue (namely, that no virtue requires in its subject a contrary disposition and that, consequently, the act of Penance cannot be the primary act of any virtue), although he says that Cajetan wrongly infers from this principle that this virtue is religion.

Hence, if anything consistent can be found beneath these expressions, it must be said that according to Suárez, Penance is the same as commutative justice (or at least its subjective part), although it differs accidentally, or in its secondary act, from that same justice exercised in relation to human beings, insofar as it cannot compensate to equality.

And in this sense Lugo understands and attacks the Suárezian position, which he reports thus: "Others ... defend that Penance does not differ from justice, among whom is Father Suárez; that is, they suppose that man has a virtue of justice which obliges him to preserve the divine right inviolate —not, indeed, justice altogether similar to that which exists among men, for he cannot render an equal return as to a man; moreover, it regards a right far more excellent and higher, namely the divine right, on account of which two considerations Suárez says it differs from the virtue of justice which exists among other men, towards the end of dispute VII, section 1. Nevertheless, he concedes that it is justice properly so called in the present dispute II, section 3, because every sin is properly an injury against God; therefore to the same justice by which we must preserve the right of God inviolate there also belongs repairing it, so far as is possible, when it has been violated; just as among men the same virtue of justice which moves one not to steal moves one to restore what was stolen."[151]

[151] Disputationes scholasticae, vol. 4, De Poenitentia, disp. 2, sect. 1, Paris, 1892, p. 376.

CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSION I

Penance is a virtue properly so called, in the strict philosophical sense, and not merely, in the common sense, a moral and praiseworthy act, as Durandus maintains (question 1).

Proof

According to Aristotle (*Ethics*, book 2, chapter 6) and sound philosophy, virtue is defined as "an elective habit according to right reason."

Now Penance is such a habit, understood not as sensitive sorrow or sadness (for that is a passion, not a virtue), but, as in the present case, as sorrow situated in the will. For insofar as it is in the will, it involves choice; insofar as it is a moderate sorrow over past sins with the intention of removing them, it accords with right reason, because it is in accordance with right reason that a person grieve over what ought to be grieved over, and in the manner and for the end in which it ought to be grieved over. That it is a habit follows from the fact that every elective act requires a habit, which the act generates through repetition or from which it proceeds after the habit has been acquired or infused.

Therefore Penance pertains to virtue properly so called, either in itself—that is, as the habit of virtue itself—or at least according to its cause—that is, as an act proceeding from some habit of virtue. That it is in itself a special and distinct habit of virtue will be proved in the following two conclusions.

To this point St. Thomas says: "To repent is to grieve over something previously done by oneself. ... But sorrow or sadness is spoken of in two ways: in one way, insofar as it is a certain passion of the sensitive appetite; and in this respect Penance is not a virtue but a passion. In another way, insofar as it consists in the will, and in this manner it is accompanied by a certain choice: and this, if it is right, must be an act of virtue. For it is said in book II of the *Ethics* [chapter 6] that virtue is an elective habit according to right reason. And it belongs to right reason that someone grieve over what ought to be grieved over, and in that manner and for that end in which it ought to be grieved over. This indeed is observed in the Penance of which we now speak: for the penitent assumes a moderate sorrow over past sins with the intention of removing them. Hence it is evident that the Penance of which we now speak is either a virtue or an act of virtue."

CONCLUSION II

Penance is a special virtue, and not a certain general condition of all the virtues, as William of Auxerre and Alexander of Hales maintain (article 2).

Proof from the proper act of Penance

The proper act toward which Penance tends is a special and determinate act, and not a general condition of the acts of all the virtues. But as the act is, so is the virtue, since a virtue or habit is specified by its act and receives from it its proper character and conditions. Therefore Penance is a special virtue, not a general condition of all the virtues.

For greater clarity

The proper act of Penance is detestation of sin, considered not in just any way—for example, as blasphemy, theft, or impurity—nor even as an offense against God considered generally, insofar as it is opposed to the divine good and renders God offended and hostile toward us, but as an offense against God in the strict sense, that is, as a violation of divine right. Hence the proper act of Penance is detestation (and in this manner reparation) of the violation of divine right.

For this is a certain special and distinct reason for detestation, entirely excluding not only the species from the genus and the common notion of detestation of sin, which is contained equally and implicitly in every virtue, but also one species from another, according to the determinate notion of detestation which is included in diverse ways in the other virtues.

To make this last assertion evident, it will help to consider the various formal aspects of sin and the ways in which it is detestable, and how these are assigned to distinct virtues.

Sin can be considered in two ways: as a moral evil (that is, as something evil) and as an evil of a person (that is, of the person for whom it is an evil). In the first way, moreover, it can be regarded either generally, according to the common notion of discordance with right reason, or specially, according to particular disagreements or malices. In the second way, it can be regarded either as an evil of man or as an evil of God; and, as an evil of God, either insofar as it opposes the divine good in itself, or insofar as it is contrary to God's good in relation to creatures, that is, against the good of God as supreme Lord and Lawgiver.

Hence a fivefold consideration of sin

Insofar as sin is a moral evil, or something at variance with right reason, it is regarded and detested by the will itself, and indeed necessarily; for the will, created by God and directed toward the good that is honorable in general, cannot will moral evil precisely as such, and consequently immediately and by its own nature rejects it without needing any superadded habit of virtue.[152]

[152] Cf. I–II, q. 56, a. 6; In III Sent., dist. 33, q. 2, a. 4, quaestiuncs. 2 and 3; Salmanticenses, De virtutibus, disp. 2, dub. 3; De bonitate et malitia, disp. 3, no. 27.

Insofar as sin implies a particular malice or divergence from right reason, it is regarded and detested directly and exclusively by whichever virtue that malice opposes: for example, impurity by chastity. For the love and pursuit of moral good, in which a virtue consists, itself brings with it hatred and detestation of the contrary malice; otherwise it would not be true love of good nor true virtue.

Insofar as sin is an evil of the very man who commits it, depriving him of supernatural gifts and rendering him liable to damnation, it is regarded and detested both by the natural inclination of the will toward one's own good, by the virtue of charity toward one's neighbor, which begins with oneself, and, especially, by the virtue of hope, by which we desire God as our own good.

Insofar as sin is an evil of God, and indeed as it opposes the divine good in itself, or the supreme good and last end, by placing a created good before it and thereby presumptuously constituting a last end, it is regarded and detested by the virtue of charity, whose proper object is the love of God above all things.

Insofar as it is an evil of God, and indeed as it opposes the divine good in relation to creatures—that is, the good of God as supreme Lord and Lawgiver —sin is regarded and detested by none of the aforesaid virtues. For, taken under this aspect, it is not formally opposed to the very good which those virtues pursue. Accordingly Penance, which regards sin under this aspect, is by no means identified with all the aforesaid virtues as their general condition, nor even with any one of them in particular, but is one special and particular virtue, specifically distinct from every other. Thus the following conclusion also remains substantially proved.

Confirmation

1. The reason of repairing a violation of a man's right is sufficient to constitute or specify a single and distinct virtue (namely justice), although a person can sin against his neighbor in many different ways. Therefore, equally —and even more strongly—the reason of repairing or

detesting a violation of divine right is sufficient for the same purpose, although one can sin against God in every possible way.

2. A particular and distinct precept of Penance is given; therefore Penance is also a particular and indeed distinct virtue. The consequent is clear from what we have quoted from St. Thomas in Conclusion I: precepts are given concerning the acts of virtues. The antecedent is manifest from the fact that a person can fulfill such a precept by a single act of contrition, without necessarily introducing the acts of other virtues, apart from the act of charity with which true and perfect Penance is indissolubly joined.

Objection

This last argument does not prove the conclusion. For a special and distinct precept is also given concerning joy, according to Philippians 4:4: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice." Nevertheless joy is not a special and distinct virtue, but, as St. Thomas teaches (II–II, q. 28, a. 4), it belongs to the virtue of charity as a secondary act following upon its first and more powerful act, which is love.

Reply

Exhortations to rejoice found in Scripture, even if they are given in the strict form of precepts, cannot be understood as special and distinct precepts in the way that commands to repent are, since their object—the act of rejoicing—does not constitute a special matter requiring a precept, because it is necessarily included in and follows from the act of charity. Hence the precept of joy is identified with the precept of charity (II–II, q. 28, a. 4, ad 3). Conversely, the explicit and commanding precept to repent must be understood as special and distinct, because its object constitutes a special matter not included in the object of the other virtues. Thus the force of the argument advanced remains.

CONCLUSION III

Penance is a virtue specifically distinct from every other virtue and therefore is not identified with charity, justice, religion, or filial fear (article 2).

Proof

The same proof advanced in the preceding conclusion, from the proper act and object of Penance, applies here, together with its confirmations. Add that, if Penance were not specifically distinct from the other virtues, since—no one denying this—it involves a special act of detestation different from the acts of the other virtues, such as love, hope, and the pursuit of justice, it would follow that Penance as such consisted not in any habit but in the act (that is, in a secondary act of another virtue), and thus, "since the acts of virtues are not present in a sleeping person, someone asleep could not be called penitent: which is false" (In IV Sent., dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 2).

It remains, then, to show in particular that Penance is specifically distinguished from the four virtues mentioned above, with which certain theologians have taught it to be identified. We shall do this in four parts.

FIRST PART: CONCERNING CHARITY (article 2, reply to objection 1)

The proper act of charity is to love God as the supreme good and consequently to detest sin insofar as it is opposed to God as the supreme good. The act of Penance, however, is to detest sin insofar as it is opposed to God as supreme Lord. In these acts two specifically distinct formal reasons are found, and consequently also two distinct virtues.

Nor is it a valid objection

Since the supreme good embraces every good, detestation of what is contrary to the supreme good must embrace detestation of those things that are contrary to all the modes of goodness considered in God, and thus also detestation of sin as an offense against God.

For, in the first place, Penance is not detestation of sin insofar as it is opposed to the divine good formally as good, but insofar as it is opposed to the good of the Lawgiver and Lord. Furthermore, if the proposed reasoning were valid, it would follow that charity can elicit the acts of all the virtues, especially the act of detestation, and indeed that all the virtues would be identified with charity, which alone would remain a virtue. The perfection of charity's object entails only that charity is the most eminent virtue in the chain of virtues, and that the acts of the other virtues proceed from it imperatively, as ordered to the ultimate end—not that it elicits these acts itself.

St. Thomas says on this matter: "An act is derived from charity in two ways: in one way as elicited by it; and such a virtuous act requires no other virtue besides charity, as in loving the good, rejoicing over it, and grieving over its opposite. In another way an act proceeds from charity as if commanded by charity; and thus, because charity itself commands all the virtues, insofar as it orders them to its end, an act proceeding from charity can also belong to another special virtue. Therefore, if in the act of a penitent one considers only displeasure at a past sin, this immediately belongs to charity, just as rejoicing over past good deeds does; but the intention of acting for the destruction of past sin requires a special virtue under charity" (article 2, reply to objection 1).

Neither is the following objection valid

Contrition, as distinguished from attrition, is detestation of sin from the motive of charity, that is, insofar as sin is an offense against God as the supreme good in Himself and supremely loved for His own sake; consequently it has the same object as charity and belongs to the virtue of charity.

For the motive of charity stands in relation to contrition as something indeed essentially presupposed, but not as that which directly specifies it. The formal and specifying object of contrition is not an offense against God insofar as He is the supreme good as such (for this is the object of the sorrow and hatred involved in the act of charity), but insofar as He is the supreme good whose right over the creature is to be repaired. Thus it operates rather by determining and restricting the object of charity through the notion of compensation and satisfaction. Consequently the act of contrition is not identified with the act of loving God as the supreme good and detesting sin as the supreme evil, but restricts and determines it according to a new formal reason of reparation and satisfaction, so that it is itself a satisfactory love of the supreme good and a reparative detestation of the supreme evil.

Nor, however, does it follow from this that Penance is a theological virtue or superior to charity, because it includes charity and modifies its object. For this inclusion and modification are not direct and formal, but indirect and, as it were, material or presuppositional: charity's object is modified by

the object of Penance with a certain diminishing modification, so that it is not the supreme good as such and simply (as charity's object is), but the supreme good whose right is to be repaired, in a manner analogous to that in which a genus is modified through a specific difference that limits its extension while retaining its comprehension, just as animal under the qualification of rationality extends less widely than animal simply and in itself.

Moreover, properly speaking, the direct and specifying object of Penance is not the supreme good itself, even as modified by the notion of compensation, but the very compensation for the right which the supreme good, considered in itself, has over the creature. Thus the supreme good is related to Penance as the end toward which it tends, and indeed as something intrinsically connoted by its object, rather than as its intrinsic constituent, as we shall say again in Conclusion IV.

From this there appears both the formal distinction between contrition and charity and their intimate relationship, which will be discussed more fully and directly in article 30.

John of St. Thomas on the matter

"Contrition is not an act elicited by charity but by Penance, although it can be commanded by charity. ... [As for the objection drawn from the likeness of the object of each virtue, the reply is] that contrition is sorrow over sins on account of God supremely loved, while displeasure at sin, and love of God for His own sake, are the very things in which the former consists. This I deny; but, taking sorrow as modifying love in the manner of expiation and vindication of sin, I concede it. Thus, because of God supremely loved, as the end that commands and directs it, it does not belong to Him as the formal and specifying reason if love of God is considered only absolutely and in itself. Accordingly it belongs essentially to Penance, not as that supreme love taken alone, but as modified and determined toward sorrow over sins by way of satisfaction and recompense."

"And when it is urged that contrition is thereby distinguished specifically from attrition, because it is on account of God supremely loved, the answer is that precisely this does not follow: if it is on account of God supremely loved absolutely and in Himself, I deny it; but if it is on account of God supremely loved insofar as He is modified and determined toward satisfaction for sin, let it pass. Yet charity does not elicit love unless it loves God absolutely and in Himself; and in the same way it grieves over and detests sin opposed to Him. But to grieve over it under such a mode, namely that satisfaction or vindication be made for its injury, belongs to a special motive; and so love of God considered absolutely is of one species, while the same love modified and determined toward eliciting sorrow by way of expiation and satisfaction constitutes essentially another species of virtue, namely Penance."

"And this very thing also occurs in other virtues and sins. For virginity is a special virtue distinct from chastity commonly so called, because it is confirmed by a vow, as St. Thomas notes (II–II, q. 152, a. 3): for only by reason of the vow can matrimony become unlawful, from which virginity abstains, whereas common chastity does not. Yet that vow is an act of religion, which is another virtue than virginity. So, when religion is considered absolutely and in itself, it is a virtue distinct from virginity and commands it; but if the vow is considered insofar as it modifies and determines the matter of chastity, rendering even marriage unlawful out of love of chastity, it thus constitutes a special virtue. Similarly adultery is a distinct species of lust insofar as it adds the deformity of injustice toward another man's wife; this injustice, considered absolutely and in itself, is of a species distinct from

lust; but if it is considered as modifying the matter of lust, it constitutes a species of the latter, inasmuch as someone is so carried away by lust and concupiscence that he even wishes to commit injustice."

"And if you ask what there is in the sorrow of Penance that this manner and reason of expiation add over and above the simple affection of charity, and what distinctive difficulty it creates: if a person who has simple displeasure at sin arising from charity thereby sufficiently satisfies God, and if he approaches the sacrament with that sorrow, he has the fruit of the sacrament, why must he have a special virtue of Penance? The answer is that charity of itself means only simple love of the divine goodness as it is in God, and displeasure at sin insofar as it is against God, whether sin be one's own or another's, without distinction. But the sorrow of Penance as expiatory adds over and above the love and sorrow of charity: first, the detestation of sin as one's own and as committed by oneself. This involves detesting it and the punishment due to us more difficultly to sustain, as belonging to our own good deeds or injuries, and also accepting the correction imposed upon us and punishment for the offense. Hence charity proceeds according to a more lofty and abstract formal reason, namely sorrow over sin as it is in oneself or another; Penance proceeds more concretely and determinately, namely sorrowing over sin as one's own and requiring correction."

"Secondly, Penance adds over and above charity a special reason insofar as it brings about a certain making of amends through the mode of justice, both in respect of fault and in respect of punishment: for it offers to God a contrite and broken heart for offenses committed and imposes upon itself a punishment, or accepts one, in satisfaction. To charity, however, although it belongs to love God and detest sin absolutely, it does not belong to make those amends and measurements, for it does not tend toward God under the aspect of something just and to be vindicated, but under the aspect of the lovable good, although from such love the expiatory and satisfactory sorrow is commanded. Hence, if someone approaches the sacrament with that simple sorrow elicited by charity, he will be justified; indeed even before the sacrament he is justified through an act of charity, since it is eminently and virtually Penance, but not formally. Therefore Penance is not superfluous, since, in order to possess that sorrow eminently and virtually, it is also required formally and in its proper manner, just as charity virtually fulfills the whole law, and nevertheless the other moral virtues are not superfluous, since they fulfill special precepts from special motives."[153]

[153] De Poenitentia, disp. 34, a. 1, nos. 21–24, Cursus theologicus, vol. 9, Paris, 1885, pp. 648 ff.

PART II. ON JUSTICE (against Durandus, Suárez, and others)

(Article 2 and Article 3; In IV Sent., dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 5.)

Penance cannot be identified with justice, as though it were a material part of justice, that is, justice toward God. The fundamental reason—which applies both to Penance and to religion—is that the perfect or specific notion of justice cannot be preserved in any act of man toward God. For the specific notion of justice consists in rendering to each his right, and thus in establishing a certain equality; hence justice is said to consist in a certain equality (a. 3).[154] For equality to be established properly and perfectly, three elements are required, from which it arises: perfect otherness (on the part of the subject), a perfect debt (on the part of the object, or of one of the terms), and perfect equality (on the part of the act of rendering, or of the other term).

[154] St. Thomas explains the reason for this equality in II–II, q. 80, a. un., and In Sent., dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 4, reply 4; cited below, p. 328 ff.

Of these three, the first and the third are lacking in an act of man toward God, because man is not perfectly other than God, but is placed under His dominion; nor can man render to Him an equivalent. This latter defect is especially manifest in the act of Penance, which consists in rendering to God His right—something infinite—through a finite compensation contained in the very detestation of the offense. Thus Penance, whose specific object is divine right to be compensated for through detestation, or compensated for unequally, differs from justice, whose object is the right of another to be compensated for according to equality.

Nevertheless we do not deny—indeed, in Conclusion V we shall maintain —that Penance truly belongs to justice as a potential part, since it agrees with justice both in the second element mentioned above, namely a perfect debt, and also in the third, insofar as it really renders the debt to God, albeit without equality.

St. Thomas on the point St. Thomas, In IV Sent., dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 5: "Because justice is a certain equality, there cannot be true adequation where the perfect notion of justice is lacking; yet there is a certain mode of justice. Thus the Philosopher says, in Ethics V, chapter 11, that what belongs to a master with respect to a slave is not simply just, but just according to the relation of lordship. Since, then, there is the greatest distance between man and God, there can be no justice properly so called of man toward God, but only some mode of justice, as it were by way of likeness" (cf. here q. 85, a. 3, corpus; see below, p. 307 ff.).

PART III. ON RELIGION (against Cajetan)

(Article 2; In IV Sent., dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 5.)

Penance cannot be identified with religion, because once again it has an act (or object) specifically distinct from that of religion: the compensation of divine right through detestation of an offense, whereas the act of religion is the offering of worship to God. Thus, although both virtues agree in regarding God Himself, and indeed as supreme Lord, and in preserving divine right, they differ in that Penance regards the compensation or reparation of right—right that has been violated and must be compensated for—and God as the offended Lawgiver to whom satisfaction is to be made; religion, by contrast, regards the acknowledgment of right through the offering of worship, right not as violated but as to be preserved inviolate or acknowledged and honored, and God as Creator and Lord to be worshipped, not as an offended party to whom reparation must be offered.

Nor is it valid to object that preserving a right intact and repairing a violated right belong to the same virtue, as is clear even in human commutative justice, which, while remaining one virtue, renders what is owed and restores what has been taken away.

For that principle is true when the same matter and object remain in view; by the same virtue of religion worship is offered to God and those who violate that worship are detested. It is not true, however, when there is a transition to a different matter and object, namely to effectively repairing the offense against God through the detestation or alteration of the will that has sinned. The alleged parity with human justice does not hold, because the debt of man toward man and the debt toward God are wholly unequal, and these are discharged by formally different acts by which divine right is observed or repaired, as will be explained in the reply to objection 15 (p. 324 ff.).

Confirmation 1. As is commonly taught with St. Thomas following Aristotle (Ethics, book II, chapter 5), a special difficulty to be overcome in a certain matter calls for a special virtue.

"But the difficulty in doing penance is greater, and indeed different from that involved in the worship and veneration of God. Toward the latter nature itself is inclined without any grief and sorrow, precisely because the knowledge of divine excellence is made manifest, from which nature has its whole being, both in its coming-to-be and in its preservation. But in order to soften the hardness of our own will, to crush our heart, and to embrace mortifications of the flesh—which are the proper works of Penance, from which its fruits proceed—we need no slight labor. And the root of this diversity comes from the very diversity of right: for God exacts compensation from us under one aspect because He is Lord, and under another because He has been offended and, as regards the affection of our will, deprived of His proper right. It is harder, and of a far different character, to appease Him as offended than to honor Him as Lord, since the former belongs properly to a servant, the latter to an enemy. Therefore, just as on our part we regard God differently when we are sinners and when we seek the reparation of friendship, so too on God's part there is a difference between the right to demand worship and the right to demand satisfaction for injuries. Each calls for its own virtue, with its own difficulty to be overcome."[155]

[155] Salmanticenses, De Poenitentia, disp. 5, § 2, no. 90, Cursus theologicus, vol. 19, Paris, 1883, p. 430.

2. From the teaching of St. Thomas Here in article 2 the intention and conclusion of the Holy Doctor are manifest: Penance is a virtue specifically distinct from every other virtue, for he assigns to it a special object, "which does not belong to the notion of another virtue."

In IV Sent., dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 5, he draws a threefold comparison between religion and Penance, from which it clearly appears that he takes them to be distinct virtues:

In the solution: "A man becomes indebted to another man in two ways. First, because something has been given to him by that other, as occurs in voluntary exchanges, such as buying and selling. Secondly, because he has taken something from the other, as occurs in involuntary dealings, such as theft, assault, and the like. Similarly, someone becomes a debtor to God because he has received something from Him; and on this account he renders to God the honor owed through latria, or religion. In another way he becomes a debtor because he has sinned against God; and thus through Penance he renders the debt owed to God. Hence, just as religion is placed by Cicero among the parts of justice, not as a species but as a potential part, inasmuch as it participates in a certain mode of justice, so likewise Penance must be placed among the parts of justice."

Ibid., reply to the first objection: "As the Philosopher says in the Ethics, virtue does not always demand what is equal, but what is possible; as, for instance, in the honors shown to parents and to the gods. Therefore, just as latria is a part of justice although it does not render honor equal to the benefits received, so too is Penance, although it cannot render anything equal to the preceding offense."

Ibid., dist. 15, q. 1, a. 2: "Man becomes a debtor to God in two ways: first, by reason of a benefit received; secondly, by reason of a sin committed. And just as thanksgiving or latria or anything of this sort regards the debt arising from a benefit received, so satisfaction regards the debt arising from a sin committed. In the honors paid to parents and to the gods, moreover, according to the Philosopher

it is impossible to return what is equivalent in quantity; it suffices, however, to render what one can, for friendship does not require equivalence except according to what is possible. This too is somehow an equality, namely according to proportionality; for just as what is owed to God stands in relation to God Himself, so what a man is able to render stands in relation to him. Thus the form of justice is in some measure preserved; and the same holds for satisfaction. Therefore man cannot make satisfaction if 'enough' implies equality in quantity. But if it implies equality of proportion, as stated above, this can occur; and that suffices for the notion of justice, and likewise for the notion of satisfaction."

Ibid., q. 4, a. 7, quaestiunc. 1, objection 2: "Latria, as was said [in the preceding distinction], is distinguished from the virtue of Penance. But satisfaction is an act of the virtue of Penance, whereas prayer is an act of latria. Therefore prayer is not satisfactory." To this the Holy Doctor replies, expressly conceding the antecedent: "There is no inconsistency in an act of one virtue being commanded by another virtue from which it is distinguished, as an act of temperance is sometimes commanded by fortitude. Thus Penance can command an act of latria, and in this way it will be satisfactory; just as sacrifices for sins were offered under the Old Law and are offered now."

Cajetan disposes of these statements with remarkable ease, writing (on article 2, no. 4):

"We do not, therefore, argue against the Author [that is, St. Thomas]. We acknowledge that Penance is truly a special virtue, taking the word in its broader sense. Nor should this appear strange to anyone, or novel in the teaching of the Author, since in the preceding book [II–II, q. 152, a. 3] something similar appears when virginity is described as a special virtue, even though it is nothing but religion determined toward such excellent matter."

The single example of virginity which Cajetan adduces to establish this broader sense of the expression "special virtue" in St. Thomas is irrelevant. For the Holy Doctor teaches in the passage cited from the Secunda Secundae that virginity is a virtue specifically distinct, "standing in relation to chastity as magnificence stands in relation to liberality," as appears from the development of the body of the article, from the comparison with magnificence, and from the tenor of the reply to the second objection, where the following expressions recur: "To have the matter of one virtue but not that of another"; "to have other virtues, but not the matter of virginity." This is also clear from comparison with the parallel passage In IV Sent., dist. 33, q. 3, a. 2, reply 4.

Nor does it matter that virginity is said there, in reply to the third objection, to involve a vow, while a vow belongs to the virtue of religion. For it does not follow from this that virginity is identical with religion, but only that the act of religion—that is, the vow—is presupposed as a necessary condition for the virtue of virginity to arise. Moreover, certain commentators, unwilling to admit with Cajetan that St. Thomas taught in the Summa that a vow is necessary for the virtue of virginity, say that he speaks there of virginity in its perfect degree and as it is commonly practiced, since In IV Sent., dist. 33, q. 3, a. 2, reply 4, he says that the formal reason of the virtue of virginity is truly present if there is an intention of preserving integrity to the end, "either without a vow or with a vow."

PART IV. ON FILIAL FEAR (against Contenson)

First, the object of fear in general is a future evil, whereas the object of sorrow in general is a present evil (I–II, q. 42, aa. 1–2; q. 35, a. 1); and the principal act of Penance is sorrow.

Furthermore, the object of filial fear is eminently God as having power to inflict evil; or, as St. Thomas says (II–II, q. 19, a. 1 and a. 9, reply 2), the object of fear is composed of a terrifying evil and the eminence of the one who can inflict it. The object of Penance, however, is an offense against God insofar as it is capable of being expiated.

Furthermore, the act of fear is an act of flight, whereas the act of Penance is one of pursuit directed against the sin from which fear flees. For the act of Penance is not simply sorrow for sin, but sorrow insofar as it is a voluntary satisfaction. Likewise the detestation of sin is one thing in fear and another in Penance: fear detests sin insofar as it opposes subjection to, and the eminence of, the God who can inflict evil upon us, whereas Penance detests sin insofar as it is a violation of divine right.

Furthermore, according to St. Thomas, filial fear does not presuppose in its subject the power to sin, and accordingly it existed in Christ, unlike Penance (III, q. 7, a. 6).

Furthermore, according to St. Thomas, filial fear is a gift of the Holy Spirit (II–II, q. 19), whereas Penance is a virtue; indeed, according to the same Doctor, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are essentially distinguished from the virtues (I–II, q. 68, a. 1). Therefore Penance does not coincide with filial fear.

When St. Thomas says here in article 5 that fear is the immediate and proper principle of the act of Penance, he is not dealing with the relation between habit and act, but between one act and another. He teaches that, in the justification of the ungodly, after acts of faith, servile fear, hope, and charity, the act of filial fear must be placed. This is thus the final act and immediate condition, and for that reason the proximate principle, of the act of Penance, which is posited last as the immediate disposition for justification.

This is clear from the very wording of the article: for the Holy Doctor, after distinguishing between habit and act, teaches that Penance considered as a habit is infused by God Himself, but that, considered as an act, it proceeds from an act of fear. Moreover, by the very fact that he says Penance as a habit is infused by God alone, or does not proceed from fear, he manifestly supposes that the habit of Penance is not the same as the habit of fear; otherwise he would be asserting that the habit of Penance does not proceed from itself, a vain assertion, since it is self-evident that nothing can proceed from itself.

Furthermore, in II–II, q. 19, a. 9, replies 3 and 4, the Holy Doctor, comparing fear on one side with the virtues of humility and charity on the other, teaches that love is the principle of fear, and fear the principle of humility; and no one explicitly or immediately infers from this either that fear is not a habit distinct from charity or that humility is to be identified with fear.

CONCLUSION IV

Penance is a moral virtue, not a theological virtue (article 3, reply to objection 1; In IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 4).

Proof

A theological virtue is one which regards God not only as its end but also as its specifying object; for it is a virtue that regards the end itself.[156] But although Penance regards God as its end—and indeed immediately, since it intends to make satisfaction to God (unlike other moral virtues, such as prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance, and so forth, which regard God as their end only remotely) —nevertheless it does not have God as its specifying object, but rather sin itself, or the offense

against God, to be repaired and compensated. Therefore Penance must be counted not among the theological virtues but among the moral virtues, although, together with religion, it approaches the theological virtues more closely because it regards God as its immediate end, unlike the other moral virtues, which regard Him as their end only remotely.

[156] Cf. St. Thomas, Disputed Questions on the Virtues in General, article 13.

St. Thomas speaks directly to the matter (In IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 4, reply to objection 2):

"Infused virtues are distinguished according as they are related to God. For some have God as both object and end, as the theological virtues do. Others have Him not as the object to which their act passes, but as their proximate end: as is evident in the case of latria, which has certain manifestations of service as a kind of matter, and orders these immediately to God as to its end. Such virtues are very close to the theological virtues; hence the acts of these virtues are attributed to the theological virtues as to those which most immediately command them. Hence Augustine says that faith, hope, and charity worship God. But some virtues have God neither as their object nor as their proximate end, but order their acts further to God. Now Penance, although it does not have God as its object, nevertheless has God as its proximate end, because it is moved to destroy sins committed in order that man may be reconciled to God; and therefore its act, namely to expel or to justify sin, is sometimes attributed to faith and sometimes to charity."

Nor is it a valid objection

It cannot be objected that Penance regards God as its object because it regards God Himself as offended and to be appeased, just as charity regards God as good and lovable.

For both the consequence of this reasoning and the proposed similarity with charity must be denied. The offense against God and its compensation are things distinct from God Himself; therefore, from the fact that Penance regards God as offended, it does not follow that God Himself is its object or an intrinsic condition of its object (whether as a genus or as the matter of its formal object, which is specified under the aspect of offense). It follows only that God is involved in the formal object as something extrinsic yet necessarily connected with it, that is, as the end to which the act is directed —or even as something extrinsic intrinsically connoted. For to be intrinsically connoted is not the same as intrinsically to constitute, as is clear concerning any objects or termini which specify the corresponding faculties from without, without intrinsically constituting them.

Confirmation

As will be shown in the next conclusion, Penance is reduced to justice, or participates in the notion of justice, although imperfectly, since it regards compensation for the violation of divine right. But "justice is a virtue directed toward another; and he to whom justice is directed is not called the matter of justice, but rather the things which are distributed or exchanged. Hence the matter of Penance also is not God, but human acts by which God is offended or appeased; God, however, stands as the one to whom justice is directed. It is consequently evident that Penance is not a theological virtue, because it does not have God for its object or matter" (St. Thomas, article 3, reply to objection 1).

CONCLUSION V

Although Penance is specifically distinct from justice, nevertheless it belongs to the virtue of justice—not to distributive but to commutative justice. Moreover, it belongs to the latter not through vindicatory justice but immediately; yet not as a subjective part of it, but only as a potential part (articles 3 and 4; In IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiuncs. 4 and 5; q. 6).

Proof, in its several parts

PART I. PENANCE BELONGS TO THE VIRTUE OF JUSTICE

That is, it is a certain true justice of man toward God (against Lugo).

First reason: by exclusion

Penance, as we have just proved, is a moral virtue; therefore it must be reduced to one of the four virtues under which all moral virtues are grouped as under their cardinal virtues, namely prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. Consequently it is reduced to justice.

That it is not reduced to prudence is evident, since prudence is an intellectual virtue, constituting the mean of reason in the matter of appetite or in the objects of the other virtues, whereas Penance is an act of appetite. Nor does anyone contend that it is reduced to fortitude or temperance; for these have as their matter and object the passions of the sensitive appetite, which they must regulate, whereas Penance is ordered to an action, that is, to the will's detestation of sin. Accordingly it belongs to that higher category of virtues which reside in the rational appetite and regard not passions but operations, such as justice and religion.

Nor does it matter that the virtue of Penance is accompanied by sensible sorrow, a passion of the sensitive appetite. For this is not the formal object of Penance but something material and extrinsic, which can be commanded and moderated by Penance and ordered to its proper end and object, namely the compensation rendered to God for sins, even by means of weeping or another act of the sensible passions.

St. Thomas says on this point:

"That which belongs to bodily change does not belong to virtue as though it were an essential act of it; but it can belong to virtue as the matter about which virtue operates, since bodily passions also are the matter of virtues. In this sense one must say that sensible sorrow, or bodily weeping, can be something material belonging to the virtue of Penance, insofar as the penitent renders these to God as a debt for the offense committed. Therefore, if by the lamentation mentioned one means the act of Penance, it signifies nothing other than detestation; but if one speaks of that which belongs materially to Penance, then it can also signify sensible or bodily weeping" (In IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 6, reply to objection 2).

Second, positive reason

The virtue of Penance resides in the will as its subject. But every moral virtue residing in the will must be reduced to justice; for justice is the only cardinal virtue residing in the will, and all the other virtues must be reduced to some cardinal virtue and have the same subject as the one to which they are reduced.

Third and fundamental reason

The proper object of Penance is concerned with the proper matter of justice, which is to render to each person his right, even though it does not fully contain the complete and formal notion of justice.

For the object of Penance is not the mere cessation of an offense but the reparation of the offense, accomplished by the very detestation of sin or change of will. Now this entails a certain compensation by which the right owed to God is rendered to Him and a certain equality is restored.

Indeed, in two ways one person becomes indebted to another, and consequently in two ways he can render him what is owed: either by reason of something he has received from him, or by reason of something he has taken away from him (In IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 5, cited below). But whoever offends someone takes something away from him (at least insofar as, against that person, he has used his own will in a way he ought not to have done),[157] and introduces an inequality (for the offended person has less, while the offender has more);[158] and thus he becomes indebted to him and can render what is owed. Now a man, by sinning, takes away from God the conversion and subjection of his will, and therefore truly becomes indebted to God and can pay Him what is owed by restoring that conversion and subjection. But this conversion of the will is contained precisely in the act of Penance itself, or the detestation of sin, because detestation and turning away from the offense are love for, and conversion toward, the offended one.[159] Therefore the act of Penance, or detestation of sin, brings about a certain true compensation of divine right, which belongs to the notion of justice.

[157] In IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 4, reply to objection 4; cited below on pp. 328 ff. of the Latin original.

[158] Ibid.

[159] In IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 6; q. 2, a. 1, quaestiunc. 1.

And so that the single objection drawn from the inequality of this compensation may immediately be overturned,[160] observe with St. Thomas[161] that such inequality in the compensation offered by an act of Penance does not prevent its possessing the notion of a true virtue and true justice, even though it prevents its having the notion of the cardinal virtue of justice and its perfect, formal species. Hence Penance is true justice, yet is formally distinguished from justice, as one virtue from another. There is no contradiction in this, since in the first assertion justice is taken according to the generic notion of rendering what is owed, while in the second it is taken according to the specific notion of rendering what is owed with equality; as will be made clearer below when we explain the proper character of a virtue which is subordinated to another as a potential part, or a so-called imperfect and improper species.

[160] Compare the unusual objections brought forward by Lugo, below in the replies to objections 18 and 19, pp. 329–333 of the Latin original.

[161] In IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 5, reply to objection 1; dist. 15, q. 1, a. 2, cited above on p. 296 of the Latin original.

Confirmation: from the parallel with religion

For, by common agreement, the virtue of religion belongs to justice (as a certain imperfect species or potential part of it), because it agrees with justice in the notion of rendering what is owed, by offering to God the worship due to Him, although without attaining equality. Therefore, by the same reasoning, the virtue of Penance belongs to justice, since it renders to God something owed to Him,

though without attaining equality; but the debt is of another kind, namely the conversion of the will through detestation of sin.

St. Thomas most aptly gathers together the whole argument and its confirmation in these words:

"Because justice is a certain equality, there cannot be a true equalization where the perfect notion of justice does not exist, but some mode of justice can exist: as the Philosopher says in Ethics V, chapter 11, what belongs to a master in relation to a servant is not simply just, but a kind of dominative justice. Since, therefore, there is the greatest distance between man and God, justice of man toward God cannot properly be spoken of there, but only a certain mode of justice, as it were by likeness. Now a man becomes a debtor to another man in two ways: in one way because something has been given him by the other, as in voluntary exchanges, such as purchases and sales; in another way because he has taken something away from the other, as in involuntary exchanges, such as theft, assault, and things of this sort. And likewise a man becomes a debtor to God through something which he receives from Him, and on this account he renders to God the honor due to Him by latria, or religion. In another way he becomes a debtor through having sinned against God; and thus he renders to God the debt of Penance. Hence, just as religion is set down by Tully as a part of justice—not indeed as a species, but as a kind of potential part, insofar as it participates in some mode of justice—so too Penance must be set down as a part of justice" (In IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 5).

PART II. PENANCE BELONGS NOT TO DISTRIBUTIVE BUT TO COMMUTATIVE JUSTICE

(Against Biel; article 3, body and reply to objection 3.)

The reason why Penance does not belong to distributive justice is drawn from the very nature of the latter. For distributive justice consists in preserving geometric or proportional equality in the goods distributed within a community; that is to say, goods are distributed in different ways in proportion to the different merits, dignity, and needs of persons. Consequently, the following characteristics belong to it: first, it is a justice of the whole toward its parts, and not of one part toward another, as commutative justice is, nor of the parts toward the whole, as legal justice is; second, it resides not in the subjects but in the ruler of the community; third, it entails a distinction between the one distributing and the one to whom distribution is made, since no one makes a distribution to himself; fourth, it concerns the distribution of goods and not the assessment of evils or punishments, as vindicatory justice does.

None of these characteristics is found in Penance. For, first, it is not a justice of the whole toward the parts, but rather of one part toward another, that is, of man toward God; second, it resides in the subject, namely the sinner; third, it imposes satisfaction upon the very subject in whom the virtue resides, namely the sinner; fourth, it concerns the assessment of evils, or satisfaction, and in this respect approaches vindicatory justice.

The reason why Penance must be reduced to commutative justice is established, first, by exclusion. Justice is adequately divided into commutative (that is, the justice of one part toward another), distributive (that is, the justice of the whole toward the parts), and legal (that is, the justice of the parts toward the whole). Now Penance is not reduced to distributive justice, as has been said; nor is it reduced to legal justice—which indeed no one has denied —whose end and object is the

observance of laws so that the common good may be preserved, a thing entirely different from the proper end and object of Penance. Therefore Penance is reduced to commutative justice.

Second, the same follows directly from the nature of the object and act of Penance, or the reparation of sin. This does not consist merely in ceasing to sin, but in a certain compensation or exchange between man and God, insofar as through contrition, or sorrow for sin, man restores to God what he had taken away by the commission of sin.

Compare what was said above about the notion of justice in Penance (p. 301 of the Latin original), and likewise St. Thomas, In IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 5, cited above. Here, in article 3, reply to objection 3, he writes:

"Penance does not possess the character of a special virtue merely because it grieves over an evil committed; for charity would suffice for that. Rather, it does so because the penitent grieves over the sin committed insofar as it is an offense against God, with the purpose of making amends. Now amendment of an offense committed against another is not accomplished merely by ceasing from the offense; a further compensation is required, which has a place in offenses committed against another, just as retribution does. The difference is that compensation proceeds from the person who committed the offense, as when he makes satisfaction, whereas retribution proceeds from the person against whom the offense was committed. Both, however, belong to the matter of justice, since both are a kind of exchange. Hence it is evident that Penance, insofar as it is a virtue, is a part of justice."

PART III. PENANCE BELONGS IMMEDIATELY TO COMMUTATIVE JUSTICE, AND IS NOT REDUCED TO VINDICATORY OR PUNITIVE JUSTICE

(Against Scotus; article 3, objections 3 and its reply; q. 90, a. 2; In IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 4, reply to objection 4; q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 6; dist. 15, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 2.)

The argument is drawn from the nature of vindicatory justice. First, it must be observed that the object of vindicatory justice is the intention to inflict punishment upon the offender himself, and thereby to obtain reparation for the injury inflicted upon oneself. In this one finds the aspect of debt and of a certain equality which the proper nature of justice requires: for punishment is owed to the offender, and, when he undergoes it, he restores equality by compensating the offended person for the honor taken away, a compensation contained in the very execution of the punishment.

Moreover, although this virtue can reside in a private person as its subject—as can the act of intending to exact vengeance and to seek the execution of punishment—nevertheless the consummation of the act by the infliction of punishment belongs to authority alone (which is proper to this virtue). Thus an act of vindication in a judge or superior belongs to legal or commutative justice.[162]

[162] Cf. Summa Theologiae, II-II, q. 80, a. un., reply to objection 1; q. 108, a. 2, reply to objection 1.

Moreover, this virtue is not a subjective part of justice, but only a potential part: it does not involve a rigorous debt, either on the part of the offended person, who is not bound to demand punishment for the injury inflicted upon him, or on the part of the offender, who is not bound to seek punishment for himself in order that the injury may thereby be repaired; rather, he is bound only to bear it if it is exacted.

But the primary object of Penance is the intention to repair the offense, so that, whereas vindicatory justice regards the punishment, Penance regards the fault.

Moreover, Penance resides in the offender himself as its subject, or is a virtue of the offender (namely, the sinner, not God), whereas vindicatory justice resides in the offended person, or is the virtue of the person offended. Thus Penance is a movement of the offender toward the one offended, but vindicatory justice is a movement of the person offended against the offender.

Moreover, when Penance is considered as a potential part of justice, it falls short of the perfect notion of justice on account of the inequality of the compensation, whereas vindicatory justice falls short on account of imperfection in the debt, which is not rigorous.

There are other differences: in Penance the punishment is not assessed by the person offended, but is freely undertaken by the offender himself; the repentance of the offender himself is intended, whereas vindicatory justice abstracts from this; and the act of punishment is executed by a private person, namely the offender himself, whereas in vindicatory justice it is executed by a public person.

St. Thomas states the matter in article 3, reply to objection 3:

"Just as there is a certain exchange in benefits, when someone gives thanks for a benefit received, so also there is an exchange in offenses, when someone, on account of an offense committed against another, is either punished against his will, which belongs to vindicatory justice, or voluntarily makes compensation by amending himself, which belongs to Penance. The latter regards the person of the sinner, just as vindicatory justice regards the person of the judge. Hence it is evident that both are contained under commutative justice."

And in question 90, article 2:

"It was said above (q. 85, a. 3, reply to objection 3) that compensation for an offense is made in one way in Penance and in another in vindicatory justice. For in vindicatory justice compensation is made according to the judgment of the judge, not according to the will of the offender or of the offended person; but in Penance compensation for an offense is made according to the will of the sinner and according to the will of God against whom he sins, because here what is sought is not merely the restoration of the equality of justice, as in vindicatory justice, but rather the reconciliation of friendship. This is accomplished when the offender makes compensation according to the will of the one whom he has offended."

From these considerations it follows that Penance is not only not a subjective part of vindicatory justice, as Scotus and his followers would have it, but not even a potential part of it, as Nugnus and Prado teach (as though it were a potential part of a potential part of justice). This is evident because the formal and primary act of Penance does not concern the matter of vindication through punishment, but is wholly comprised in reconciliation and satisfaction for guilt. These two concepts constitute essentially disparate lines and can be conceived apart from one another.

This does not, however, deny that Penance, with respect to its secondary act —which is the voluntary undertaking of punishment proceeding from sorrow for sin and ordered toward the reparation of sin —assumes a certain character of vindication and is therefore reducible to vindicatory justice, as a potential part in the broadest and improper sense of the word. It is in this sense that texts of St. Thomas can and should be understood when adduced by opponents; this is evident also from the

very words of the Doctor just cited, who equally and immediately places Penance and vindicatory justice under commutative justice.

PART IV. PENANCE BELONGS TO COMMUTATIVE JUSTICE AS AN IMMEDIATE PART OF IT; NOT AS A SUBJECTIVE PART, BUT ONLY AS A POTENTIAL PART

(Article 3; In IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 5.)

To understand the argument, sufficiently indicated above in Conclusion III (pp. 293 ff. of the Latin original), observe that philosophers distinguish three kinds of whole: the integral, the universal (or logical), and the potential; and consequently three corresponding kinds of parts, namely integral, subjective, and potential. We formally set forth and explained this division above in Article V (pp. 199 ff. of the Latin original).

Applying these distinctions to the matter of the virtues, moral theologians distinguish the integral, subjective, and potential parts of a given virtue.

Integral parts

The integral parts of a virtue are not parts out of which the habit of virtue itself, or its act, is physically constituted or composed; for a habit or act of virtue is something simple and indivisible. Rather, they are certain acts, dispositions, conditions, or functions which together contribute, as it were, to the perfection of the act of the virtue itself, and without which that act would not be perfect or could not be elicited. Thus "to do good" and "to avoid evil" are assigned as the integral parts of justice; and memory, understanding, reason, foresight, circumspection, and so forth as those of prudence. Integral parts, taken together, constitute the whole; but taken separately they do not participate in the nature of the whole, nor is the whole predicated of each singly, just as in physical things one does not say that a foot or hand is the body.

Subjective parts

The subjective parts of a virtue are related to it as species to their genus, and hence the nature of the whole, or the entire essence of the virtue, is found in each singly, just as the nature of a genus is found in each species, and the nature of animal in both man and brute beast. Thus commutative, distributive, and legal justice are parts of justice, while personal, political, domestic, and military prudence are parts of prudence.

Potential parts

The potential parts of a virtue are certain virtues specifically distinct from it, yet having some connection or similarity with it on the side of their object or matter. They are concerned with the same matter or object, although not with the matter perfectly and formally under the same aspect; or they attain the object in some particular manner insofar as they refer to the primary object in a similar way, though not perfectly in the same way. Hence they are called potential parts because in them the force of the whole (or of the virtue) is in some manner manifested, as the nature of being is participated in potency. They are also called imperfect species because they participate in some way in the nature of the virtue concerned, but not perfectly, as species participate in a genus and as subjective parts participate in the nature of a virtue. Thus counsel, judgment, and command (or, in other terminology, *euboulia*, *synesis*, and *gnome*) are parts of prudence; and religion, piety, vindicatory justice, liberality, gratitude, and the like are parts of justice.

The particular case of justice

With respect to justice, then, since it consists in a certain equality, or in rendering to another what is owed according to equality, the perfect and proper character of this virtue requires two things: a perfect or rigorous debt, and a perfect equality of compensation. Some add a third requirement, which is rather the foundation of the second: perfect otherness; for no one can render a payment according to equality to one who is not perfectly another but is constituted under the dominion of the person to whom he owes the debt.

Hence a virtue can fall short of the perfect notion of justice in two ways and be not a subjective part but only a potential part. It may fall short of the notion of debt, insofar as it involves not a perfect or rigorous debt but only a greater or lesser moral obligation, founded in the very excellence of the act. Such are the potential parts of justice: vindicatory justice, truthfulness, gratitude, liberality, affability, and so forth. Or it may fall short of equality: although it renders what is owed, it cannot render it according to equality in the strict sense. Such are those potential parts of justice which presuppose in the subject the absence of perfect otherness (founded in a relation of strict or moral dominion), namely religion, piety, and observance. For man cannot make an equal return to God, under whose dominion he is perfectly constituted; nor can children make an equal return to their parents, under whose authority they are placed by the very fact that they have received life through them; nor can any person make an equal return to those who excel in virtue or dignity, under whose moral dominion they are in some fashion constituted.[163]

[163] On all these matters, compare Summa Theologiae, II-II, q. 80, a. un.

Penance, therefore, is not an integral part of justice, since it is not some condition or disposition of an act of justice, but a distinct and specific habit and act. Nor can it be a subjective part of justice; for although it concerns the matter of justice and in a way attains justice's object—that is, equality, or rendering to another what is owed according to equality—and although it agrees perfectly with justice in the notion of a strict debt, it nevertheless falls short of justice in the very notion of equal return or compensation, just as religion and other moral virtues related to God do. The reason for this defect is ultimately rooted in the absence of perfect otherness between God and man, who is completely placed under the divine dominion. It follows, therefore, that the virtue of Penance is "a potential part of justice," as St. Thomas expressly calls it,[164] or "justice in a certain respect," to use the Doctor's own expression in article 3, body, where he explains the intimate ground of the distinction between the two virtues and writes:

[164] In IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 5.

"Hence it is evident that Penance, insofar as it is a virtue, is a part of justice. It must be known, however, that according to the Philosopher (Ethics V, chapter 1), what is just is spoken of in two ways, namely simply and in a certain respect. What is simply just is between equals, because justice is a kind of equality. This he calls political or civil justice, because all citizens are equal insofar as they are immediately under the ruler, as free persons. But what is called just in a certain respect exists between those of whom one is subject to the power of another, as a servant under a master, a son under a father, or a wife under a husband. And this kind of justice is considered in Penance."

"Thus the penitent has recourse to God with the intention of amendment, as a servant to his master, according to Psalm 122:2: 'As the eyes of servants are on the hands of their masters, so are our eyes

upon the Lord our God, until he have mercy on us'; and as a son to his father, according to Luke 15:21: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee'; and as a wife to her husband, according to Jeremiah 3:1: 'Thou hast prostituted thyself to many lovers; nevertheless return to me, saith the Lord.'"

REPLIES TO THE OBJECTIONS

Since we have explicitly or equivalently removed the principal arguments and objections of our opponents in the course of the Conclusions themselves, it remains for us to meet certain principles of theirs, or particular instances which they adduce.

AGAINST CONCLUSION I, WHICH ESTABLISHES THAT PENANCE IS A VIRTUE PROPERLY SO CALLED

Objection 1

According to another definition handed down by the Philosopher (Physics, book VII, chapter 3), virtue is "a disposition of what is perfect toward what is best." But Penance is not such a disposition, since it presupposes an imperfect subject, indeed one defiled by sin. Therefore Penance is not a virtue properly so called.

Reply

In that definition of virtue the expression "of what is perfect" refers to the subject, not as considered apart from the virtue itself, but as including it: that is, the subject is understood to be perfect not before receiving the virtue, but by reason of it, as being informed by it. Thus, when we say that heat is an act of what is hot, the subject is understood to be hot through the very heat itself; otherwise we should have to say that heat is an act of what is cold. Likewise, we should have to say that the soul is the form of prime matter, and not the form of an organic body, which is constituted as such through the very soul.

Penance, then, is a genuine disposition of what is perfect, because through it a man is made perfect from being imperfect, or from being a sinner; nor are the other virtues dispositions of what is perfect in any other sense, since the subject considered as preceding them is in no way perfect.

St. Thomas himself raises and resolves this difficulty, both in his Commentary on the Fourth Book of the Sentences, distinction 14, question 1, article 1, quaestiuncula 2, reply to objection 5, and here in the Summa, article 1, reply to objection 1. In the latter passage, while also showing the difference between shame and Penance, he says:

"Shame regards a shameful deed as present, on account of which one fears disgrace; whereas Penance regards it as past. Now it is contrary to the perfection of virtue that someone should presently have a shameful deed of which he ought to be ashamed; but it is not contrary to the perfection of virtue that someone should previously have committed shameful deeds for which he ought to repent, since a man becomes virtuous from having been vicious."

Objection 2

The act of Penance, since it tends toward something impossible, namely the nonexistence of sin, consists in a certain conditional willing, or mere velleity; consequently it cannot be a habit firmly elective, as a virtue is. Moreover, the act of one who repents presupposes an imperfection on the part

of the subject which is not involved in the nature of the other virtues. Again, it consists in the negative act of fleeing and hating.

Reply

From these considerations it would follow at most that the act of Penance is a secondary act of one or more virtues (which, however, will be refuted below in the replies to objections 7–11), but by no means that it is in no way an act of virtue, but only a praiseworthy act, as Durandus maintains. As to the first assertion, namely that Penance consists in a conditional willing, an answer was given in the preceding article (pp. 274–276 of the Latin original).

Objection 3

Shame is not a virtue properly so called, but only a praiseworthy act and passion, as St. Thomas teaches (II–II, q. 144, a. 1), following Aristotle (Ethics, book II, chapter 7; book IV, chapter 9). Therefore neither is Penance. The parallel is established by the fact that both are movements or resistances of the appetite regarding something shameful.

Reply

The supposed parallel between shame and Penance is denied. For although they agree in a general and material way in being movements of the appetite concerning evil, they differ specifically and formally, both on the side of the movement of the appetite and on the side of its object.

On the side of the movement of the appetite, shame is a movement of the sensitive appetite, or a passion, and therefore cannot be a virtue. Penance, however, is a movement of the rational appetite, involving an election of the will, which belongs to the essence of virtue. Shame is fear (namely, fear of disgrace), whereas Penance is sorrow or detestation. Fear, however, is not itself a virtue, even though supernatural fear may be a principle of virtue, or of Penance itself, and indeed a gift of the Holy Spirit.

On the side of the object, which is evil, shame regards a shameful deed under the aspect of causing dishonor and disgrace (which is foreign to the formal object of virtue), but not under the aspect of guilt and of an evil to be detested and destroyed, as Penance does. From this follows a subtler and more intimate difference, relative to the nature of virtue: namely, that shame regards a shameful deed as present, which is contrary to the nature of virtue, whereas Penance regards it as past, which is not contrary to the nature of virtue, as we learned from St. Thomas (article 1, reply to objection 1, cited in the preceding reply).

For a correct understanding of this reason, observe that although Penance also regards present sins, it does not regard them as present, since it aims at their absence or destruction and flight from them; nor can anyone repent while committing sins. Conversely, although shame may also regard past shameful deeds, which are recalled to memory or come to the knowledge of others, it nevertheless regards any shameful deed as present, either because it is being committed at present (for one can be ashamed while actually sinning or adhering to sin), or because it is presently being disclosed to others or recalled to one's own memory.

"Now it is contrary to the perfection of virtue," says St. Thomas, "that someone should presently have a shameful deed of which he ought to be ashamed; but it is not contrary to the perfection of virtue that someone should previously have committed shameful deeds for which he ought to repent,

since [by means of this Penance, whereby sin is removed or detested] a man becomes virtuous from having been vicious" (article 1, reply to objection 1).

The subsequent words of St. Thomas in his Commentary on the Fourth Book of the Sentences, distinction 14, question 1, article 1, quaestiuncula 2, reply to objection 5, likewise bear on the point:

"Shame is fear of what is shameful; fear, however, concerns the future; and the future is feared only insofar as it has a proximate disposition in its cause. Therefore shame posits a proximate disposition in the person who is ashamed, toward committing something shameful, as the Philosopher speaks of shame; and for that reason it necessarily posits an imperfection in the person in whom it exists. But Penance regards what is shameful in the past, to which perfection in the present can succeed; and therefore it is not necessarily an act of an imperfect person."

Objection 4

Continence is not a virtue properly so called, but only a certain principle of praiseworthy acts, as St. Thomas teaches (II–II, q. 155, a. 1) following Aristotle (Ethics, book IV, chapter 9), because, although it has a praiseworthy and indeed arduous object (namely vehement passions), it nevertheless regards the vehemence of those passions, which is not fitting to the nature of virtue. For the same reason, therefore, Penance is not a virtue properly so called, since it regards a deformed subject and the matter of sin, although it has a praiseworthy and particularly arduous object, namely the detestation of sin.

Reply

The parallel between Continence and Penance is denied.

Considering the aspect of praiseworthiness, Continence involves something incompatible with the perfect notion of virtue: it presupposes the vehemence of the passions and therefore does not moderate the passions or set them at the mean of reason, as Temperance does, but merely restrains them and holds back from them. Yet it belongs to the perfect notion of virtue to moderate the passions, or reduce them to the mean of reason, so that "the sensitive appetite is subjected to reason in such a way that vehement passions do not arise in it contrary to reason" (II–II, q. 155, a. 1; cf. I–II, q. 58, aa. 2–3). On the contrary, Penance presupposes in the subject no imperfection contrary to the perfect notion of virtue, since it is a moderated sorrow over sin and a total detestation of it.

Considering, moreover, the aspect of difficulty, the difference is that the difficulty of Continence arises solely on the side of the subject, and therefore does not establish the nature of a special virtue, whereas the difficulty of Penance arises on the side of its object (for to repent, or to detest sin and convert one's will, is a difficult thing which cannot even be accomplished without the help of grace), and thus requires and specifies a special virtue.

To the point St. Thomas says, De Veritate, question 26, article 6, reply to objection 15:

"Speaking of difficulty on our part, the passions involve greater difficulty than acts of the will; but difficulty in this sense contributes to merit only accidentally … and similarly neither do the passions. But speaking of difficulty arising from the excellence or goodness of the thing, which of itself contributes to merit, in this sense there is greater difficulty on the side of acts of the will."

Objection 5

If Penance were a true virtue, it would follow that the more someone sinned, the more virtuous he would become: for the more one sins, the more one is able to repent. Thus it would be better to commit many sins than to refrain from sinning.

Reply

From the fact that Penance is a virtue it rightly follows that the more and better someone repents, the more virtuous he becomes; but it by no means follows that the more someone sins, the more virtuous he becomes through repenting.

For, in the first place, that Penance is more perfect by which a person so grieves over sin and withdraws from it as not to fall back into it, than that by which he rises again after repeated sin. The perfection of Penance is not measured by a repetition of the act as such, but by its quality, or the intensity of the detestation by which one is withdrawn from sin. Repetition of the act contributes to the perfection of repenting only when a person grieves again and again over a past sin without again falling into it. Moreover, a person who sins again destroys and loses Penance itself and the other infused virtues; but it is more perfect to preserve a recovered virtue than to recover it anew, since this manifests a greater adherence of the will to good and a greater withdrawal from evil. Furthermore, according to Thomistic doctrine, one who rises again through Penance recovers the virtues previously possessed only according to the degree of his present dispositions. Consequently it can readily happen that one who frequently sins, rising again from sin with less virtue, by that very frequency of sinning manifests less resistance of his will to sin and renders good dispositions more difficult in the penitent who returns.

Objection 6

The act of repenting, taken in itself, does not involve that perfect character of moral goodness or praiseworthiness which is required for the essence of virtue. For the love of satisfaction, or of compensation for sin, includes a love of sin itself: he who loves the whole loves its parts; and sin belongs to this compensation as a part, since it is essentially included and implied in the very notion of compensation.

"The difficulty is explained as follows: the person who wills the good of compensation, precisely as it is such a good, either wills only the present act of homage, as distinguished from the past occurrence of an offense, or wills both. If the latter, then he wills the past occurrence of the offense: for to will a complex whole as such is to will that both parts exist, or have existed; therefore he wills both parts of that complex whole. But if the former is maintained, then he does not will the good of compensation: for a present act of homage, considered as distinct from a past offense, is not compensation; it is formally called compensation because it is performed after an offense."[165]

[165] Cited by Lugo, Disputationes scholasticae, vol. 4, De Poenitentia, disp. 2, sect. 3, no. 26 (Paris, 1892), p. 383.

Reply

Lugo,[166] as though yielding to this difficulty (which he reports and examines at length), grants—an astonishing admission!—that the act of compensation or satisfaction in some way includes love of sin itself, though not, he says, an absolute love, but only a simple and conditional love;[167] indeed (astonishing to hear!) he maintains that God himself similarly desires sin when he desires the punishment of sin.

[166] Lugo, loc. cit., sect. 3, nos. 25, 26, 36, 37, 38; sect. 4, no. 43; pp. 382–388.

[167] From this same reasoning Lugo is led to deny that the character of satisfaction is the formal object of Penance, as will be shown in Article XIV (pp. 359 ff. and p. 369 of the Latin original).

Beginning from the notion and moral character of God's punitive justice, he says that sin contributes as a part to the constitution of punishment (for punishment is composed of suffering and sin), and consequently that sin itself "partly constitutes the moral goodness and goodness of punishment, which is rendered lovable and desirable insofar as it is suffering"; thus "God, in willing the good of that punishment, insofar as it is punishment, wills in some way the past sin which is a part of that complex object and because of which the sinner is afflicted"—not, however, so that he loves sin with an absolute affection, just as he does not absolutely love the suffering itself, but with a simple and conditional affection. Applying this logical explanation to the nature and moral character of Penance, Lugo likewise says that a penitent so desires the compensation resulting from homage to God and from sin that he has, toward that homage, an absolute affection, and "only a simple affection toward the past sin, as a part of the goodness [which exists in the compensation]."

Nevertheless, a conditional love of sin of this kind is either nothing at all or is a genuine willing of sin (even if conditioned), which cannot be conceived absolutely in God and, in a penitent, is contradictory, since Penance is essentially a withdrawal of the will from sin. As for the argument advanced by the objector—which Lugo seems to admit as though compelled, albeit improperly—that love of compensation for sin is also love of sin, it is a mere sophism, reasoning falsely from the nonexistence of sin to the existence of sin.

For sin enters in some manner into the concept of compensation not according to its being, or as something which is, but according to its nonbeing, or as something which is not: that is, not as something established by the compensation, but as something destroyed through it, since compensation for sin is identical with the removal of sin, and indeed with a removal proceeding from the will. Hence the will to make compensation for sin is in no way directed toward the being of sin, but solely toward its nonbeing; and therefore it does not include a desire for sin, but rather a desire for the absence of sin. Similarly, the will to kill Peter does not include love of Peter, but, if one may so speak, love of Peter's nonexistence. Furthermore, sin enters into the concept of compensation not properly as a part, or as an intrinsic element, but only as a term or an extrinsic connotation. Nor does it follow that compensation involves an intrinsic connotation of sin: for it is one thing to be that which is intrinsically connoted and referred to, and another to be something intrinsic, as is evident from the objects of all powers and from the terms of all relative things.

AGAINST CONCLUSION II, WHICH ESTABLISHES THAT PENANCE IS A SPECIAL VIRTUE

Objection 7

The object toward which Penance tends, namely an offense against God or a violation of divine right, is a general condition and circumstance of the object of every virtue, since it is found in each and every sin, which is opposed to each virtue. Therefore Penance, too, is a general condition of all the virtues.

Reply

I distinguish the antecedent: the object of Penance, considered materially, is a general condition of the object of all virtues; I grant this. Considered formally, I deny it, for no other virtue considers the character of an offense against God as such in its formal object. I distinguish the consequent likewise: Penance is a general condition of all the virtues, speaking materially and improperly, inasmuch as it touches upon the matter of all the virtues; I grant this. Speaking formally and properly, inasmuch as it is formally included in the other virtues and does not differ specifically from them; I deny it.

All these things are clear from what was stated in Conclusion II itself.

To this purpose St. Thomas says, here, article 2, reply to objection 2:

"Penance indeed really has a general matter, insofar as it regards all sins, but nevertheless under a special aspect, namely insofar as they can be amended by the act of a man cooperating with God toward his justification."

And in his Commentary on the Fourth Book of the Sentences, distinction 14, question 1, article 1, quaestiuncula 3, reply to objection 2:

"Although Penance has its act concerning the matter of all vices, and consequently of all virtues, nevertheless it considers a special aspect of the object in the matter about which it acts, as has been said; just as magnanimity also in a certain way has for its object and matter the acts of all the other virtues, insofar as they are great, since it works great things in all the virtues, as is said in the fourth book of the Ethics, chapter 9; and therefore, just as magnanimity is a special virtue, so too is Penance."

Objection 8

To pursue good and to flee evil belong to one and the same virtue. But the pursuit of good belongs to every virtue. Therefore the flight from evil also belongs to every virtue. Yet to repent is to flee evil. Therefore Penance is a general condition of all the virtues.

Reply

As was said in Conclusion II, every virtue involves flight from and detestation of evil under some aspect, that is, insofar as evil is opposed to the very good which each virtue pursues. But it belongs to Penance alone to flee and detest evil insofar as it is opposed to the good of God as supreme Lord and Lawgiver. Moreover, as will be explained in the reply to objection 12, Penance implies a positive act of assault against sin, directed toward its destruction, rather than a merely negative act of flight.

Objection 9

Penance tends toward the general expulsion of all sins. But opposites are expelled by opposites. Therefore Penance is not some special virtue but a general one.

Reply

Penance is ordered to the expulsion of all sins not as they are many, but as they are one under the indivisible aspect of an offense against, or violation of the right of, God. Accordingly it does not consist in several virtues or in the general condition of several virtues, but in a single, indivisible virtue.

As St. Thomas subtly observes (in the Commentary on the Sentences, at the passage cited below, in the reply to the following objection), Penance "is not formally opposed to every sin, but only to one, which is impenitence."[168]

[168] On this sin of impenitence, compare below, Article XXII, Conclusion III, Proof 4, pp. 486– 488 of the Latin original.

Moreover, charity itself is likewise opposed to all sins and yet is one special virtue, since it regards all sins under the one aspect of their opposition to the divine good considered in itself.

Objection 10

Penance tends toward the expulsion of sin from the subject. But every virtue tends toward the same thing. Therefore Penance is identified, in a general way, with every virtue.

Reply

Every virtue expels sin from the subject formally, namely by the very placing of a habit that informs the subject (or, more strictly speaking, by reason of the grace which is infused with the virtue). But Penance alone expels sins effectively, or through the subsequent act proceeding from the habit itself, insofar as it operates through the very principal detestation directed toward the removal of sin.[169] Furthermore, the act of the other virtues is not formally ordered toward repelling sin under the aspect of an offense against God, but under some other aspect proper to each virtue, as was shown in Conclusion II.

[169] Compare below, Article XVIII, where this is explicitly discussed.

To this purpose St. Thomas says, here, article 2, reply to objection 3:

"Every special virtue formally expels the habit of the opposite vice, just as whiteness expels blackness from the same subject; but Penance effectively expels every sin, insofar as it works toward the destruction of sin, inasmuch as sin can be remitted by divine grace with man cooperating. Hence it does not follow that it is a general virtue."

And in his Commentary on the Fourth Book of the Sentences, distinction 14, question 1, article 1, quaestiuncula 3, reply to objection 1:

"Every virtue formally expels the opposite sin according to its first act, which is to inform the subject. But the second act in the other virtues, which is an operation, is not principally ordered to repelling sin, as it is in Penance. Therefore Penance does not formally but, as it were, effectively expel sin: for it has the sin to be expelled as its matter, and it operates against it that it may be expelled. Hence it is not formally opposed to every sin, but only to one, which is impenitence; and for this reason it does not follow that it is a general virtue."

In the same work, question 2, article 1, quaestiuncula 1:

"Penance can be considered insofar as it is a sacrament and insofar as it is a virtue; and in either way it operates in some manner toward the remission of sins. For insofar as it is a sacrament of the New Law, grace is given in it to heal the defect against which it is instituted, namely the remission of actual guilt. But it also works toward the remission of sin insofar as it is a virtue, in a special way before the other virtues. For according to every virtue informed [by grace], sins are remitted on the part of the habit, by reason of the grace which is infused along with it; and this is to remit formally. But Penance, by reason of its act, has the property that sins are remitted through it, insofar as sins

committed are the matter of its act. For when sin is said to be remitted or retained, this has the character of an offense: that which removes an offense takes away sin. Now since an offense, insofar as it is such, is a certain inequality, whereby one has withdrawn from another what was due to him, the act of that virtue remits sin which reduces the aforesaid inequality to equality. Penance does this, as is clear from what has been said, since in recompense for the divine offense it offers a contrite spirit to God; and therefore it also belongs to Penance, on the part of its act, to remove sin. And in this way sins are effectively, and not only formally, remitted through Penance."

Objection 11

That Penance is a general virtue follows both from the fact that its act—that is, the detestation and expulsion of sin—is commanded by all the virtues, each of which tends to expel the evil contrary to itself; and from the fact that Penance includes in some way what belongs to the other virtues (for it has the character of a theological virtue, because it regards God himself; that of a moral virtue, because it consists in a sorrow that is intermediate or moderated; and that of justice, because it is compensation for an offense); and from the fact that faith, hope, fear, and love concur in producing the act of Penance, that is, the detestation of sin.

Reply

All these points do indeed confer upon Penance a certain general character, which will be discussed below in Article XIX; but they do not make it a general virtue, that is, a virtue not specifically distinct from the others.

For, first, the act of Penance is commanded, but is not elicited, by the other virtues, which elicit their own act of hatred of sin under the aspect of its opposition to the particular good they pursue. In the same way, the very act of those virtues can in no wise be elicited by Penance, but only commanded by it. Second, the essential character of the other virtues, such as charity or justice, does not belong to Penance itself; rather, it has some general or partial element of them. Thus man has something in common with stones, brute animals, and angels; yet, although he is confused with them under those common descriptions, he is not thereby a general condition. Third, the acts of faith, hope, charity, and fear indeed concur in the production of the act of Penance, with a certain priority of nature or time, but as an extrinsic principle, as will be explained in Article XVII, where we shall speak of the principle of Penance.

AGAINST CONCLUSION III, WHICH ESTABLISHES THAT PENANCE IS A VIRTUE SPECIFICALLY DISTINCT FROM EVERY OTHER VIRTUE

Objection 12

The act of repenting cannot be the primary act of any virtue. But a virtue or habit is constituted and specified by its primary act. Therefore Penance is not a distinct virtue, but only a secondary act of some other virtue, such as charity, justice, or religion.

The major premise is proved by two reasons:

1. The act of repenting is a negative act of flight, namely detestation of sin; yet the primary act of any virtue cannot be an act of flight, but is a positive act of pursuit, from which the very act of

flight proceeds (cf. II–II, q. 19, a. 1). For since the object of the will is the good, its first act is an appetite for the good, by reason of which there follows hatred of the contrary evil.

2. The act of repenting necessarily presupposes in the subject sin itself, or that which is contrary to the virtue. But the principal act of a virtue cannot be such as to require in the subject that which is contrary to the virtue itself; for no virtue presupposes its contrary in the subject. Thus temperance and liberality do not presuppose a vicious subject, that is, an intemperate or avaricious one.

This second reason is the first which Cajetan proposes as convincing to his own understanding:

"For the negative side, that is, that it is not [a special virtue], a twofold reason urges. One is taken from the properties [of virtue]. For no virtue requires or presupposes the person possessing it to be under its contrary. But Penance presupposes that the penitent has been under sin, which is contrary to Penance. Therefore Penance is not a special virtue. And this reason convinces my understanding."

Reply

I deny the major premise. To the two proofs I reply:

1. The act of repenting is not simply an act of flight and hatred, but primarily and of itself includes an act of pursuing some good, namely compensation for the divine offense through sorrow itself and the detestation of sin, or through a change of will. For although sorrow and detestation themselves consist in withdrawing from sin, and are thus conceived as something negative in relation to sin, yet in itself this very withdrawal from sin is something positively good, consisting in a change of will and in compensation for the offense against God. The same, moreover, occurs in certain other virtues, such as temperance and modesty, whose honorable object consists in withdrawing from something.[170] The very act of restoring a thing taken away, which pertains to justice, is a positive act; for although it includes a certain negative act of separation from another's property, it nevertheless consists in the pursuit of a good, which is the compensation of another's right.

[170] Cf. In IV Sent., dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiuncula 2, ad 4, cited shortly below.

Moreover, the proper act of flight which directly pertains to Penance, and which follows secondarily upon the aforesaid act of pursuit, is hatred and flight from that which is contrary to this pursuit, namely hatred of the failure to make compensation for the divine offense. For this reason St. Thomas most aptly says (in the passage cited in the reply to Objection 10) that Penance is formally opposed not to every sin, but to one alone, namely impenitence.

Hence the proposed reason proceeds from a confusion, or an illegitimate distribution, of formal objects. For Penance is not formally hatred and flight from sin in just any manner, nor even a love of the contrary rectitude conjoined with that hatred; for these belong generally to every virtue (and especially to charity), each in its proper matter. Rather, Penance is love of compensation for the divine offense and hatred of the failure to make such compensation.

Observe, however, that when we call Penance an act of love—namely love of compensation for the offense against God—we do not mean an explicit and signified act of love. In supernatural matters,

love so understood is the act of charity alone. We mean instead an implicit love exercised in the act itself, which is contained in every act of the will concerning some determinate object. Hence Penance directly and immediately is an act of compensatory sorrow, and explicitly tends toward sin as something for which compensation can be made through sorrow; while, in performing this act, it thereby also exercises the intention to make compensation and love of that compensation.

To the point, the Salmanticenses write:

"Although every act of a virtue residing in the will is a willing of an object attained for its own sake, inasmuch as in the very act by which the will attains the object and wills it, the will also wills itself to attain it, as is the constant and perpetual doctrine of St. Thomas, nevertheless not every act of the will, or of a virtue, is an expressed and formal love, explicitly tending toward the goodness of the virtue signified and, as it were, speculatively apprehended. For this, in the natural order, belongs to a special act of the will, whose first act is formal and explicit love, as St. Thomas teaches in the First Part, question 20, article 1; and in the supernatural order it belongs to Charity, whose office is expressly to love God, and everything else for his sake, as is clear from II–II, question 20, article 1. Thus, although through an act, for example, of Mercy, the very goodness of that virtue is attained, it is not nevertheless expressly and explicitly [willed] as the goodness of Mercy in general, but only in a practical way and in execution, insofar as it is included in relieving another's misery about which the act is concerned. This indeed holds in all the other virtues; but it ought especially to hold in Penance, which of itself is primarily ordered and instituted for reconciling man with God and for entering anew into the friendship severed through sin. Therefore no other love, or more explicit love, should be attributed to it than that which is contained in contrition itself and in sorrow for the offense against God."[171]

[171] Salmanticenses, Cursus Theologicus, De Poenitentia, disp. 5, dub. 2, § 7, n. 77, vol. 19, Paris, 1883, p. 420.

2. To the second reason, in which Durandus, Cajetan, and Suárez especially place their confidence, the major premise is granted, but the minor is denied. To its proof a twofold reply is made:

First, I deny the supposition, namely that if a virtue does not presuppose its contrary in the subject, neither should its act presuppose it. The transition from habit to act, or conversely, is illegitimately made when the conditions of each are in question. For since the habit stands in the manner of a potency, while the act is its actual exercise, not everything required for the existence of the act is necessarily required for the existence of the habit. Thus the virtues of vindication and mercy can exist before there is an evil to be avenged or misery to be relieved, although their acts cannot be exercised unless these objects actually exist. Similarly, the virtue of Penance can exist before sins, although its act cannot. Since, however, both habit and act are ultimately referred to the same object and accordingly each in some respect presupposes it—at least as regards its possibility—in order to leave no room for an objection and to overturn the difficulty from its roots:

Second, the assertion itself must be distinguished. "No virtue presupposes its contrary in the subject in order to act": I deny this. "No virtue presupposes its contrary in order to exist": I distinguish: no virtue presupposes the existence of its contrary, I grant; the possibility of its contrary, I deny. And this is precisely what we affirm occurs in the virtue of Penance. Although, in order to exist, it does not presuppose in the subject the existence of its contrary, namely sin—and thus is present in

baptized infants and in Adam before sin, and indeed even in the Blessed Virgin—nevertheless, in order to act, that is, to exercise its act, it presupposes in the subject the existence of its contrary. Indeed, even in order simply to exist it presupposes in the subject not the actual existence but certainly the possibility, at least the absolute possibility, of its contrary; for this reason it cannot exist in Christ.

We therefore deny the fundamental principle which our opponents assume or presuppose, namely that it is contrary to the nature of a virtue to presuppose in its subject either the existence or the possibility of its contrary. For whatever imperfection arises from this belongs entirely to the material object, or even to the subject, and consequently does not in any way pass into the habit itself or contaminate its formal object. But if that formal object were thereby contaminated, Penance would in no way be an act of virtue, not even a secondary act; this is contrary to the opponents themselves.

St. Thomas, in his Commentary on the Fourth Book of the Sentences, distinction 14, question 1, article 1, quaestiuncula 2, objection 4 and its reply, proposes this same objection and succinctly resolves it:

"[Objection.] Every virtue is ordered toward the good. But Penance is said to be ordered toward evil. Therefore it is not a virtue." "[Reply.] The good toward which a virtue is immediately ordered is its perfected act; and accordingly some virtues have their principal act in withdrawing from something, as has been said [in the Commentary on the Third Book of the Sentences, distinction 23] of temperance and modesty and such virtues. Similarly, the perfected act of Penance consists in withdrawing from some evil; nor does it follow for this reason that it is not a virtue."

The matter is confirmed by its very parity with other virtues which presuppose some imperfection on the part of their matter, although in a different subject.

To the point, the Salmanticenses write:

"It is not contrary to the nature of virtue to presuppose a defect, whether physical or moral, which it excludes, as is clear in mercy, for which there is no place without another's misery, and in vindicatory justice, which is directed primarily to avenging injuries done to inferiors. But whether this defect is in the virtue's own subject or in another argues only for a difference on the side of the virtues; it does not imply anything contrary to the nature of virtue. And indeed, if there is no one who denies that there is a proper and special virtue distinct from all others for avenging injuries done to others out of the good of justice, no reason appears why there should not be a special virtue for expiating one's own injuries. For one's own good, other things being equal, is to be preferred to another's, and one's own reconciliation with God is not less worthy of esteem than the punishment of others for preserving the integrity of the law.

"Accordingly, neither Aristotle nor Cicero nor any other of the philosophers who discussed the virtues with the greatest precision assigned the condition which Cajetan tries to establish. They asserted only that virtue is concerned with something difficult, from whatever source the difficulty arises, whether from what pertains to others or from what pertains to oneself. This holds especially in those virtues instituted to drive away obstacles, and Cajetan will not deny that Penance is such a virtue. For since its acts are part of the sacrament of Penance, whose grace is medicinal and, speaking of itself, primary, those acts ought of themselves and primarily to tend toward healing the subject, and consequently toward expelling the disease contracted through sin. Hence, just as bodily

medicine, as Martin de Ledesma, Soto, and others well observe, presupposes infirmity, and there are certain herbs or medicaments serving this one office of uprooting corrupt humors without thereby losing their character as effective things in the natural order, so, in a not dissimilar way, must one theologize concerning Penance among the virtues."[172]

[172] Salmanticenses, De Poenitentia, disp. 5, dub. 3, § 3, n. 100, Cursus Theologicus, vol. 19, Paris, 1883, p. 437.

Moreover, it is by no means denied that Penance, although perfect in the specific character of a virtue, must be numbered among those virtues which are otherwise imperfect by reason of the imperfection of their matter, just as mercy, faith, and hope are.

For St. Thomas distinguishes two kinds of virtues (I, q. 95, a. 3): some perfect virtues, which presuppose no defect in any respect, such as charity and justice; others imperfect, which presuppose a defect either on the part of the act, as faith and hope do, or on the part of the matter, which is to be accepted not approved but destroyed, as mercy, through which another's misery is destroyed, and Penance, through which one's own sins are destroyed.

In somewhat the same way, in the treatise On God One, a distinction is made between perfections that are simply simple, such as intellect and will, which presuppose no imperfection and therefore exist formally in God, and mixed perfections, such as reasoning and seeing, which presuppose some imperfection and are found in God only virtually. For the latter, considered in their specific character as perfections, are properly and formally perfections, and yet they fall short of perfections called simply simple because they presuppose some defect on the part of the act or subject, such as a passage from potency to act in reasoning, or even composition of matter and form in seeing.

Objection 13

Penance is not distinct from the virtue of Religion, for compensation for an offense, which is intended through the act of Penance, consists in rendering to God what is owed, which is the proper object of Religion.

To the point, Cajetan himself writes:

"Another reason is drawn from the object. For this object, namely an offense to be compensated for by a proper act, and so forth, does not require a proper virtue. This is apparent ... from the fact that another virtue sufficient for such compensation is found, namely religion. For the act of religion is to subject oneself to God and to render to God what is owed, not less when he is offended than when he bestows benefits. Therefore, just as rendering to God what is owed on account of benefits received does not require a special virtue beyond religion, so also rendering to God what is owed on account of an offense against him belongs to religion. For although these are special kinds of debt, namely for benefits or for offenses, they fall under that common kind of debt which religion considers.

"And this is confirmed. For the principal act of Penance coincides with the primary act of religion. For the subjection of man to God is the principal thing which the virtue of Penance offers to God in compensation. Religion offers that same thing: according to the act of absolute devotion; according to the act of gratitude, for benefits received; and according to the act of Penance, for an offense committed. Thus, just as a certain act of religion is to repay benefits, so too is it to make compensation for sins." (On article 2, no. 3.)

Reply

As we have sufficiently established in Conclusion III (pp. 294–297 of the Latin original), Penance and Religion agree in rendering to God what is owed, but under a twofold formal aspect, which therefore requires a formal distinction of the virtues.

To the confirmation it must likewise be said that both virtues agree in the notion of rendering subjection to God, but under two irreducible formalities: namely from the motive of worship or reverence, which belongs to Religion, and from the motive of compensating for an offense, which is proper to Penance. Moreover, it is by no means denied that an act of Penance is sometimes commanded by Religion, and is thus in a certain way reducible to it, insofar as it is, as it were, inspired by Religion and directed toward its end. But this implies neither the mingling nor the reduction of one virtue to the other; it implies only a subordination of their respective acts and ends, which is common to all the virtues in relation to one another and also belongs to Religion itself in relation to Penance.

Objection 14

The reason of contraries is the same. But joy, which is contrary to sorrow and sadness, does not constitute a distinct virtue, but is a secondary act of the virtue of charity, as St. Thomas teaches in II–II, q. 28, a. 4. Therefore sorrow for sin is likewise not a distinct virtue, but a secondary act of some virtue, such as charity, just as the very hatred of sin which precedes sorrow is.

Reply

I distinguish the major premise: contraries have the same character under the aspect in which they are contrary, I grant; under every aspect, I deny. I grant the minor premise. I distinguish the conclusion: sorrow for sin is not a distinct virtue under the aspect in which it is opposed to joy, that is, insofar as it is sorrow of any sort over an evil of God, I grant; under another aspect, namely insofar as it includes compensation for an offense against God, I deny.

Joy and sorrow therefore stand differently in the present question. For in joy there is found no distinct objective aspect of goodness and difficulty requiring a distinct virtue; consequently the act of joy is elicited secondarily by charity, from which love and hatred, desire and fear, joy and sadness or sorrow, proceed in ordered fashion. But in sorrow for sin a special aspect of goodness and difficulty is found, namely the very aspect of compensation that takes place in sorrow. Accordingly, although sorrow itself together with joy may proceed from charity, the intention of making compensation through sorrow must proceed from another virtue.

To the point St. Thomas says, here, article 2, reply to objection 1:

"If ... only displeasure at past sin were considered in the act of the penitent, this would belong immediately to charity, just as rejoicing over past goods does. But the intention of working toward the destruction of past sin requires a special virtue subordinate to charity."

To the point John of St. Thomas writes:

"Joy and sorrow can be considered in two ways: in one way, as they are simple affections following upon the love of some object. For from the fact that we love some object it follows that we rejoice in its presence and grieve at its absence, and hate its contrary. And in this way hatred of sins, and sadness or sorrow concerning them, do not constitute a virtue distinct from charity, just as joy concerning God does not. In another way, however, sorrow can be understood under a special aspect,

namely insofar as it works toward the expiation and vindication of sin, because sin is offensive to God. And under this aspect it involves another special motive, beyond the simple affection of charity: namely, the motive of justice, as making satisfaction for an injury, at least imperfectly; and in this way it pertains to Penance. But in joy we do not find such a special order and motive beyond the simple affection of delight arising from love; and thus a special virtue is not assigned to joy. Yet it can be assigned something higher than virtue, namely the gift of the Holy Spirit which is wisdom: for this tends toward knowing divine things by a certain experience and savor of divine things, which savor and taste arises from the delight and joy had concerning divine things. Thus such joy of charity pertains to the gift of wisdom, concerning which St. Thomas is to be consulted in II–II, question 45, article 2."[173]

[173] John of St. Thomas, De Poenitentia, disp. 34, a. 1, n. 10, Cursus Theologicus, vol. 9, Paris, 1885, p. 643.

To forestall a certain subtle objection, observe with St. Thomas that Penance does not consist in sorrow as in the immediately given formal aspect, but in the intention of compensation found in sorrow itself (or in the desire to make compensation through sorrow). For if to repent were to remain most formally in the order of sorrow itself, it would have rejoicing as its contrary; the objection would thus be reinstated from the equal character of contraries: if sorrow could specify a distinct virtue, so could the contrary joy (or joy over the contrary object). Sorrow, therefore, stands as that which formally grounds the special aspect of compensation which specifies Penance. And herein lies its difference from joy, since joy, which is opposed to sorrow, grounds no special aspect (for example, of compensation or any other sort) which would require a special virtue; nor is it contrary to sorrow under that specifying aspect.

There is indeed also a joy concerning compensation made through sorrow (or joy concerning the very act of repenting and sorrow taken with satisfaction); but this, as is clear, is not opposed to sorrow, but rather has sorrow itself as its object (cf. q. 94, a. 9, ad 2). Nor does it require a special virtue, because it does not introduce a distinct goodness and difficulty, but is elicited by charity, whereby a person loves that he repents and rejoices that he sorrows.

Something similar is observed concerning the act of hope in comparison with joy. For although the act of desire, no less than joy, proceeds from charity, nevertheless the desire for a good whose attainment is arduous yet possible requires the distinct virtue of hope, because the very arduity together with the possibility of the object grounds a special aspect of goodness and difficulty. This does not occur in the object of joy. To the point St. Thomas says, II–II, q. 28, a. 4, reply to objection 2:

"Hope follows from love, as joy does; but hope adds on the side of the object a certain special aspect, namely that of an arduous yet possible good which one may attain; and therefore hope is assigned as a special virtue. But joy adds no special aspect on the side of the object above love that could cause a special virtue."

Objection 15

Among men, by the same virtue of commutative justice, compensation is made both for benefits received (in contracts of sale and purchase) and for injuries inflicted; for either compensation has the same character of rendering to another what is due. Therefore, by parity of reasoning, with respect to God, by the same virtue compensation is made both for benefits received, which belongs to Religion, and for injuries inflicted, which belongs to Penance. Therefore Penance is the same virtue as Religion.

Reply

First of all, this argument proves far too much. For from it there would follow that Religion itself, no less than Penance, must be suppressed as a distinct virtue, and that both must be confused, by equal right, with a certain third, unnamed virtue, which might be called imperfect justice toward God — unless, indeed, one wishes to call this very thing Religion and thereby play with words.

Moreover, the argument advanced by some for reducing Penance to this more general notion of Religion does not in any way prevail.

Certain authors, such as Soto and Valencia, answer by denying the antecedent, saying that even among men there is one virtue by which a debt is discharged for benefits received, namely justice, and another by which satisfaction is made for offenses. And since this latter does not possess a determinate name, it may be called human penance, by analogy with the virtue of Penance according to which we say that a man makes satisfaction for injuries inflicted upon God.

But this recourse to human penance seems wholly to be rejected, both because of the reason given by the objector—for the virtue of justice suffices by the formal character of its object to discharge both duties of compensation —and because the aforesaid virtue of human penance is something unheard of among the Doctors, and does not accord with the teaching of St. Thomas (here, article 3, body and reply to objection 3; compare pp. 305 and following of the Latin original), who reduces compensation for offenses to commutative justice.

Hence we answer with other Thomists, such as John of St. Thomas, Gonet, and the Salmanticenses, by conceding the antecedent and denying the consequent and the parity.

For the account of justice between men is one thing, and that of justice toward God another. In the former there is a perfect account of justice, involving perfect equality in rendering what is due; and so it suffices to discharge both offices, of compensating for benefits received and making satisfaction for offenses, since these two are materially distinguished but share the formal character of an equal compensation, which is regarded by justice. But, conversely, between man and God, since equality is not given either in compensating for benefits received or in making satisfaction for offenses, there is no perfect justice and consequently no single virtue able to discharge both offices. Instead, in place of justice, two distinct virtues must be posited, each of which discharges one of these offices: Religion and Penance. Nor are they directly reducible to one another, since they have different acts to be exercised; nor can they conveniently be brought under a third, more common virtue, because there is no source from which such a notion could be derived, as is derived in the case of human justice.

Nor does it help, for such a common account, to take up the generic notion of rendering a debt to God in whatsoever manner. For the notion of rendering a debt is an analogical and indeterminate notion, which is not divided into the accounts of rendering according to equality and according to inequality as a genus into species, but as the perfect and imperfect notion of the same order. Consequently, it cannot constitute some determinate species, but only several species, one of which bears itself as perfect and another as imperfect in the same order. Precisely so stand the virtue of justice on the one hand, and Religion, Penance, piety, and observance on the other. Nor can the imperfect notion of rendering a debt according to inequality itself be taken as the notion specifying one virtue, since it is not a positive notion in which several could agree, but only a negative one, involving the lack of conformity with the perfect rendering of a debt; and such a defect is not

univocal, but disjunctive and multiplied, according to the saying, "Good comes from an integral cause; evil from any defect whatsoever."

Moreover, if the generic notion of rendering a debt could specify a single virtue, the distinction between justice, piety, and observance would thereby be suppressed, even among men. Likewise, if the negative notion of rendering according to inequality could specify a single virtue, it would absorb within itself not only the virtue of Penance but also Religion; and thus, together with Penance, the distinct virtue of Religion would disappear, as said above.

Objection 16

Penance is not distinguished from the virtue of charity. For Penance regards a divine evil, or an offense against God, by fleeing from it, while charity regards the divine good, or the goodness of God, by seeking it. But it belongs to the same virtue to regard good and evil, to seek good and flee from evil. Therefore Penance is nothing other than a secondary act of charity.

Reply

As explained in Conclusions II and III (pp. 289 and 290 and following of the Latin original), Penance and charity regard the divine good and evil in different ways, and in different ways involve the pursuit of the divine good and flight from sin. Charity, namely, regards the divine good in itself and as something to be sought, and consequently regards sin as simply to be detested. Penance, however, formally regards the divine right as something for which compensation must be made, and consequently regards sin as an injury to divine right which must be repaired. In a word, charity loves; Penance makes satisfaction.

AGAINST CONCLUSION IV, WHICH ESTABLISHES THAT PENANCE IS A MORAL VIRTUE

Objection 17

Penance is not a moral virtue, but a theological one. For a virtue which does not consist in a mean on the part of its proper object (or which does not have a mean in attaining its object) is not a moral but a theological virtue, as St. Thomas teaches in II–II, question 17, article 4, reply to objection 2. Now Penance does not consist in a mean, nor does it have any measure or limit in attaining its object, since there can be no excess in detestation of sin; rather, sin ought to be detested without limit, just as there is no excess in loving God, who, on the contrary, ought to be loved without measure. Reply

Penance also consists in a mean, because its object or act of detesting sin, as something created and finite, is measurable by the dictate of reason through prudence. "It belongs [indeed] to reason that someone should sorrow over what ought to be sorrowed over, and in the manner and for the end for which sorrow ought to be felt; this indeed is observed in Penance ...; for the penitent assumes a moderated sorrow for past sins with the intention of removing them" (here, article 1).

For the understanding of this point, the following observations should be made from St. Thomas (especially I–II, question 64).

The mean in the virtues is understood according to conformity with their rule or measure: namely, insofar as the object of a virtue neither exceeds the rule nor falls short of it. But in the measure itself one is not to admit a mean and extremes.

In the theological virtues, therefore, and only in them, considered in themselves and with regard to the character of the virtue drawn from its proper object, there is no mean, because there is no distinction between object and measure and therefore no measured object, since their object is itself the measure: God himself, who is measured by none and is the measure of all (compare also II–II, q. 17, a. 5, ad 2). Hence, considering the virtue itself, there cannot be excess in believing, hoping in, or loving God. Nevertheless, accidentally—that is, on the side of the subject and with reference to a secondary object—there is measure in a theological virtue, insofar as we are bound to believe, hope in, and love God in accordance with the measure of our condition. Thus, in the virtue of hope, "as far as those things are concerned which someone trusts that he will obtain, there can ... be a mean and extremes, insofar as he either presumes things above his proportion, or despairs of those which are proportionate to him" (II–II, q. 17, a. 5, ad 2). Similarly there can be an excess in the love of God if someone takes such delight in contemplating him that he thereby withdraws from works of charity toward his neighbor and from observing the other precepts. In these cases the mean is found not in the object of the virtue, but in the subject acting virtuously; and it is assigned and measured by reason through prudence.

In intellectual virtues, both speculative and practical, which have truth as their proper good or object —absolute truth in the speculative virtues and truth conformed to a right appetite in the practical— this mean consists in conformity with what is the measure of truth, that is, conformity with the thing itself, according as what is, is said to be, and what is not, is said not to be. Nevertheless, in the practical intellectual virtue, namely prudence, this mean, regulated by the thing itself or by the rectitude of reason, assumes the character of a rule and measure in relation to appetite. Hence prudence and the moral virtues which are in the appetite have the same mean; but prudence possesses it as ruling and measuring, while the moral virtues possess it as ruled and measured.

In the moral virtues, which perfect the appetite with respect to some determinate matter, the mean consists in conformity with right reason or the dictate of prudence, since reason itself is the measure and rule of appetite in regard to things appetible. But the manner in which such a mean is received in the virtue of justice differs from that in the other two cardinal virtues, namely fortitude and temperance. For the matter of justice is not subjective passions, but operations consisting in external things, in which rightness ought to be established simply and according to the thing itself. Therefore its mean of reason is the same as the mean of the thing, insofar as justice gives each what is owed, neither more nor less (compare also II–II, q. 58, aa. 10–11; q. 80, single article). The matter of fortitude and temperance, however, consists in the interior passions, which different people experience in different ways; consequently, in these virtues the mean of reason is not the same as the mean of the thing, but is differently received according to the dispositions of different people.

St. Thomas, here, article 3, reply to objection 2, formally assigns the mean of justice, saying:

"The mean of justice is equality, which is established between those between whom there is justice."

Penance, however, is not a theological virtue, because, as stated in Conclusion IV, it does not have God as its object and therefore neither as its measure. Nor is it an intellectual virtue, as is clear; rather, it is a moral virtue belonging to the cardinal virtue of justice. Therefore in it the mean is received as in a moral virtue, namely by conformity with right reason or the dictate of prudence, and indeed as in the virtue of justice: namely in such a way that the mean of reason is the mean of the thing, or that the operation in which Penance consists is such as the order of things itself requires.

Now the order of things and right reason require a moderated sorrow for sin, to this end: that through the turning of the will away from sin, or away from the injury done to divine right, that very injury may be compensated for by a certain imperfect equality or proportion; and that, by taking away that which the man possessed in excess through sinning, compensation may be made to God for what was taken from him by man through sin.

The mean of Penance therefore consists essentially in this very imperfect or proportional equality, according to which a regulated compensation, proportioned to human possibility, is rendered to God for sin, insofar as there is restored proportionately to God through sorrow as much as was subtracted from him through sin.

Accidentally, moreover, the mean of Penance consists in this: that moderate punishment and satisfaction are undertaken for the punishment due for sin; also, that the sensible passion of grief and sadness, which often accompanies interior sorrow, is moderated by the dictate of prudence; and, likewise, that through the direction of that same prudence a man is prevented from insisting so intensely and continuously on acts of displeasure for sin that he is thereby withdrawn from the acts of other virtues which are more urgent at a given time.

By no means, however, does the mean of Penance consist in making a discrimination among sins, so that some are detested and others retained, as temperance sets a mean in delights by rejecting some and retaining others. Nor does it consist in imposing a certain remission on the act of detesting sin, either in intensity or duration, so that one could not attempt to detest sin as much or for as long as possible. For temperance and fortitude regulate passions, which can have an excess both in intensity and in duration.

The following words of St. Thomas are pertinent to the question:

"The mean of justice is equality, which is established between those between whom there is justice, as is said [Ethics, Book V, chapter 1]. But in certain cases perfect equality cannot be established, on account of the excellence of one of the parties, as between father and son, or between God and man, as the Philosopher says [Ethics, Book VIII, last chapter]. Therefore in such cases he who falls short ought to do whatever he can. Nor, however, is even this sufficient simply, but only according to the acceptance of the superior; and this is signified by the excess which is attributed to Penance." (Here, article 3, reply to objection 2.)

"The mean in justice is not taken in the same way as in the other moral virtues, as was said in Book III [distinction 33]. For the mean of justice is taken according to the equalization of thing to thing. This equalization, however, takes place in commutative justice when something is taken away from him who had more, and added to him who had less. But he who offends or injures another has more; and he who has been injured has less, insofar as something which was owed to the latter was taken away from him, while the former used his own will in what he ought not to have done. Thus vindicatory justice takes from him who committed the offense as much as he has more than is due, and gives it to him who was injured, while it punishes the offender for the honor and satisfaction of the other. Accordingly, vindicatory justice establishes a mean in offenses, which are its matter, not indeed by keeping a mean among offenses, retaining some and rejecting others, as temperance establishes a mean in pleasures, but by proportioning the punishment due to every offense. And similarly Penance inflicts upon itself the punishment due for every sin committed; it does not do so

by dismissing some sin and retaining another." (In IV Sent., dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiuncula 4, ad 4.) "This condition is found in the acts of virtues, namely that they do not admit excess and deficiency, as is proved in the second book of the Ethics [chapters 6 and 7]. Hence, since contrition, as regards the fact that it is a displeasure in the rational appetite, is an act of the virtue of Penance, there can never be anything excessive in it, either in intensity or in duration, except insofar as the act of one virtue impedes the act of another which is more necessary for the time. Hence, the more a man can remain continually in acts of this displeasure, the better it is, provided that he leaves room for the acts of other virtues in their own time. But the passions can admit excess and deficiency, both in intensity and in duration. Consequently, just as the passion of sorrow which the will assumes ought to be moderately intense, so it ought to last moderately, lest by lasting too long a man fall into despair, faintheartedness, and vices of this sort." (Supplement, q. 4, a. 2; compare q. 3, a. 2, cited below in article 25.)

AGAINST CONCLUSION V, WHICH ESTABLISHES THAT PENANCE IS A POTENTIAL PART OF COMMUTATIVE JUSTICE

Objection 18 (Lugo) Penance does not belong to the virtue of justice. For, as was explained above (pp. 283 and following of the Latin original), first, not every sin involves an injury or injustice against God in the proper sense; secondly, even if every sin involved an injury, the duty of repairing it by justice would not thereby follow; thirdly, if this duty did follow, a sinner would be bound, under pain of committing a new actual sin, to make an act of contrition as soon as possible.

Reply

These arguments of Lugo, which at first sight already appear unusual, are advanced by an altogether fallacious mode of reasoning and rest upon unstable principles.

The first argument errs in distinguishing, in relation to God, between the notion of injury and that of offense as though they were separable from one another, and likewise between the notion of Lord and that of Lawgiver. For since God possesses the fullest right of dominion over all human acts, so that they must be directed to him as their ultimate end, in every sin by which a man turns away from God as his ultimate end there is not only an offense against God but also an injury to him, or a violation of divine right (cf. *De veritate*, q. 28, a. 2).

The second argument—that from an injury against God there does not arise a duty of reparation—opposes the very natural law, according to which one is bound by justice to repair harm inflicted upon another or to restore a right that has been violated, where the injured party possesses a right in the strict sense, as God does. Moreover, it does not follow from a man's inability to repair an injury by repeating the very same act which he omitted that he cannot offer restitution: for he can offer a compensation, namely by the very act of Penance. Again, from the fact that this new act is already owed by virtue of God's power or under several other titles, it does not follow that compensation cannot be made by true justice; it follows only that this compensation or satisfaction is not strict and perfect justice, nor a fully adequate satisfaction. Otherwise one would have to deny the possibility of every meritorious act *de condigno* and of every properly so-called human satisfaction made to God.

The third argument proceeds from an incorrect understanding of the precept of Penance. This is an affirmative precept, not a negative one, and therefore it binds always, but not at every moment—that is, not immediately or at the earliest possible instant. For the act of Penance is a positive act; nor

does it, properly speaking, restore what was subtracted by the omitted act, since that omitted act cannot be performed again. Rather, it makes compensation for what was omitted.

Objection 19 (Lugo) If Penance belongs to justice, then it should be called perfect justice, so as to be identified with the virtue of justice itself or to be its subjective part, but not its potential part. Thus Lugo (*Disputation* 2, section 1, nos. 6–8), who, in favor of Suárez, endeavors to undermine the force of the argument advanced in the fourth part of Conclusion V, by the following arguments:

1. It is material and accidental to the notion of justice itself whether the compensation made is equal or unequal, provided that one compensates as much as one can. For justice formally obliges only to render equality insofar as it can be rendered, whether wholly or in part, according to one's powers; it would be contradictory to owe by justice more than could be provided. Therefore, if Penance involves the obligation of compensating for sin, it is, by that very fact, perfect justice, although it can compensate only unequally.

2. Furthermore, properly speaking, a satisfaction made unequally cannot be reconciled with the mode of justice. For if one makes satisfaction in such a way as to repair the debt or offense in part, one already satisfies equally for that part and thus acts according to perfect justice: just as someone who owes one hundred and pays ten, which alone he possesses, makes satisfaction in perfect justice for one part of the debt, namely for ten.

3. That a man cannot make satisfaction to God on the basis of equality is accidental, rather than essential, to man; for human nature can be raised to the hypostatic union and so make worthy and equal satisfaction, as is evident in the mystery of the Incarnation. Hence, although it be admitted that a man through Penance truly makes satisfaction for sin, even if only partially, one cannot infer that Penance is not perfect justice.

4. Penance makes complete and equal satisfaction for venial sins. Therefore, if Penance involves the obligation and act of justice, it must be called perfect justice, at least with respect to venial sins. Reply

1. To the notion of justice, taken simply as the formal virtue of justice, the notion of equality is by no means accidental but altogether essential: equality, moreover, understood simply and objectively, by which, in fact and on the side of the thing itself, as much is rendered as is owed, and not merely as much as is possible on the part of the subject. In precisely this does justice differ from the other virtues: its mean is determined not by relation to the subject, but by the thing itself. Hence, in justice the mean of reason is said to be the mean of the thing (cf. above, Reply to Objection 17; also II–II, q. 58, aa. 10–11, and q. 80, sole article). Consequently, by the very fact that Penance renders to God what is owed not according to how much man owes, but according to how much he is able to render, it falls short of the notion of the virtue of justice.

2. The contradiction is only between unequal satisfaction and perfect justice (or the formal virtue of justice), not between unequal satisfaction (or imperfect and proportional equality) and imperfect justice (or a potential part of justice), such as Penance precisely is. The example, moreover, of a debtor who renders ten for the hundred he owes is not pertinent. For neither satisfaction nor an injury done to God is something divisible, as one hundred coins are; and

consequently a part of satisfaction cannot make equal satisfaction for a part of the injury, especially because an injury against God is something infinite and of a wholly different order from a man's satisfaction.

3. It is essential to human nature not elevated to the hypostatic union that it cannot make satisfaction on the basis of equality. Indeed, it is essential to human nature simply as such that it cannot make equal satisfaction for its own sin—that is, that it cannot repent *de condigno*—since a sin of its own cannot occur in a nature elevated to the hypostatic union.

4. Against certain theologians, even Thomists, we concede that Penance makes satisfaction *de condigno* for venial sins (although not according to the whole rigor of justice, as is evident). But it does not follow from this that Penance is perfect justice, since it is not such with respect to mortal sin, which is its primary object. For the species of a virtue is derived only from its primary act and object (cf. II–II, q. 28, a. 4): just as charity is specified by love, and not by desire or joy, and religion is specified by divine worship. Hence, from the fact that Penance makes worthy satisfaction for venial sins, and even for the temporal punishment due for mortal sins, it does not follow that it is perfect justice, just as religion itself cannot be called such although, in a certain secondary act, namely in the payment of tithes, it observes strict equality. Compare what is said on this matter below, both in Article XIV (p. 376 of the Latin original) and especially in Articles LII and LIV (Chapter VI, On Satisfaction).

You will say Satisfaction for venial sins is made by the very act of contrition, which is the primary act of Penance.

Reply

In the act of contrition itself, which in itself and in relation to other acts is the primary act of Penance, a distinction must be made with respect to its objects. Thus, in relation to mortal sin and eternal punishment, that act is primary; but in relation to venial sin and temporal punishment, whether due for venial sins or for mortal sins, it is only a secondary act. For first and of itself contrition tends toward the removal of the turning away from God, simply so called—that is, of sin, simply so called—and toward the restoration of divine friendship; consequently, however, and in a secondary fashion, it tends toward the removal of those things which in some manner diminish that friendship, namely venial sins, and toward the extinction of the punishments consequent upon sins.

You will insist The act of Penance or of satisfaction must possess the same formal character in relation both to venial sins and to mortal sins, since in either case it proceeds from the same habit, which is specified by one formal character of its own. Therefore one of two things must be admitted: either perfect equality and justice are admitted in both cases, or they are denied in both.

Reply

The antecedent, both as to the direct assertion concerning the act of Penance and as to the additional proof concerning the one formal character specifying the habit, is not simply true, but must be accepted with a distinction.

For all the acts of a power or habit must indeed regard one and the same formal object and proceed under the same formal character; nevertheless, they need not all do so in the same way. It is required

only of the principal act that it regard that object as its immediate formal object. For a secondary act it is enough that the same formal object be regarded mediately: that is, as the root and moving cause which directs that act to attaining another formal and immediate object, connected with and ordered to the first. Hence two formal objects must be distinguished for a power or habit: one principal, immediate, and specifying, toward which the principal act tends directly; the other secondary, mediate, and consequent, which is wholly subordinate to the principal as to its cause and end, and toward which the secondary act tends directly while the principal act tends toward it remotely.

Nor are we forced to assert this concerning the virtue of Penance alone. For charity itself, although it is specifically one virtue, in addition to the principal act of loving God, by which it immediately reaches its formal object, also elicits the distinct secondary act of loving one's neighbor. This act does not immediately reach God himself, but rather one's neighbor. Similarly, although the primary act of the will is the intention of the end, which is the formal and specifying object of the will, nevertheless, by reason of that intention of the end, the will also elicits the secondary act of choosing means, whose proximate and formal object is not the goodness of the end itself, but the usefulness of the means themselves, or their relation and conduciveness to the end.

Objection 20 (Durandus, Suárez, Reynaud) It belongs to the same virtue both to preserve an unviolated right and to repair one that has been violated. But preserving an unviolated right is the proper object of justice. Therefore Penance, which is the reparation of a violated divine right, is not distinguished from the virtue of justice, unless perhaps as one of its subjective parts.

Reply

I concede the major, with a distinction of the minor: that the proper object of justice is to preserve an unviolated right, and consequently to repair it in whatever manner, I deny; that it is to preserve and repair it according to equality, I concede. I distinguish the conclusion: that Penance is the reparation of divine right according to equality, I deny; according to inequality, I concede. Or, distinguishing further: that it repairs divine right taken properly and strictly, that is, the divine good in relation to creatures, insofar as God is considered as Lord and Lawgiver, I concede; that it repairs divine right taken broadly, that is, the divine good considered in itself, or the moral good which is some participation of the divine good in creatures, I deny; for thus divine right is the object of charity and of other virtues.

For the understanding of these distinctions, and to avoid the confusions that readily arise from this manner of speaking, the following observations should be made.

1. "To preserve a right unviolated" is an ambiguous expression and does not in every sense signify the primary act of justice, or an act which precedes the very reparation of a violated right. For just as the nature of virtue in general consists in pursuing good and avoiding evil, or establishing the good and preserving it, so the nature of justice consists first in establishing what is just and, secondly, in preserving it (II–II, q. 79, a. 1, body and reply to objection 3). But to establish what is just is to render to another what is owed to him, whether by giving or by restoring; hence preserving a right unviolated is something subsequent to giving and to restitution.

In Penance, therefore, a right is established through restitution itself, or, more precisely, through compensation for the violation of the precepts which are the matter of other virtues. Such compensation is contained in the very act of contrition, which properly constitutes the primary and positive element of this virtue, namely, "to pursue good." Its secondary and negative element, however, namely, "to avoid evil," consists in the purpose of not sinning thereafter, through which the right established by compensatory contrition is preserved.

2. "To preserve divine right unviolated" (an expression upon which our opponents often insist to prove that Penance is identified with justice) may be understood in two ways, according to a twofold signification of divine right, the one improper and the other proper.

First, in an improper sense, divine right is preserved unviolated by observing the commandments, either taken generally (since in this way man is wholly directed and subjected to God), or taken particularly as regards some particular matter, such as charity, religion, or chastity. Here divine right is considered not properly as the object of justice, but as the divine good considered either generally or particularly, and it is regarded not by Penance but generally by all the virtues subject to the dominion of charity (cf. II–II, q. 24, a. 12), and particularly by each virtue in its own matter.

Secondly, in a proper sense, divine right is preserved unviolated by rendering to God what is owed Him from the debt of justice, or of a certain equality. This rendering occurs in two ways: either by the offering or commutation of what has been received, which is done by the virtue of religion; or by compensation or commutation for what has been taken away in an offense, which is done by Penance. Thus these two virtues divide between themselves the twofold office belonging to one virtue of human justice, which, according to its specific nature, cannot be maintained between man and God.

Objection 21

By the act of contrition, equal and perfect compensation or satisfaction is made to God for sin; for by contrition the ordering to the ultimate end, which had been taken away by sin, is restored. Therefore Penance possesses the nature of perfect justice, or is the formal virtue of justice.

Reply

The antecedent is denied, together with the assumption added in support of it; for in restoring the ordering to the ultimate end, no perfect satisfaction is contained. For a better understanding of this, observe that sin may be considered in two ways: on the part of man and on the part of God.

In the first way, sin involves a privation of grace and of the ordering to the ultimate end, and is something finite, as is the subject in which it is received. Hence the goodness of the act of contrition, insofar as it involves the reconversion of the will to the ultimate end, in one respect equals the malice of sin, and indeed often exceeds it, since sin is opposed to virtues inferior to charity itself, from which the act of contrition proceeds. But in this respect it does not have the moral nature of compensation or satisfaction; it has only the physical nature of restoration, because an evil of the subject himself, as such, does not demand satisfaction, which is essentially directed to another.

In the second way, that is, on the part of God and insofar as sin is an evil and an offense against God, sin takes on the moral character of infinite malice. Contrition, however, does have the nature of satisfaction inasmuch as it is directed toward another; nevertheless its moral goodness does not

equal the malice of sin, since it remains finite. For the goodness of honor or satisfaction is measured by the dignity of the person who gives the honor, whereas the malice of the offense or sin is measured by the dignity of the person offended.

Moreover, we shall deal with these matters below, expressly and in detail, in Article 50 (Chapter VI, On Satisfaction).

Article 13. Whether the primary elicited act of Penance is contrition, that is, "sorrow of soul and detestation for sin committed, with the purpose of not sinning henceforth"

ARTICLE XIII

Whether the Primary Elicited Act of Penance Is Contrition, or "Sorrow of

Soul and Detestation of the Sin Committed, Together with the Purpose of Not Sinning Henceforth" (III, q. 85, a. 1; Supplement, q. 1, a. 1)

STATE OF THE QUESTION

From consideration of the virtue itself we proceed to consideration of the act which flows from it, in order that the formal and precise character of that act may be more clearly determined, since by that act, as by its specifying and determining term, we have already determined in the preceding article the formal character of the virtue itself.

We are concerned here only with THE VERY ESSENCE OF CONTRITION; for its division, properties, efficacy, and sacramental character will be discussed in the following Chapter III.

The first question, therefore, is whether the act of contrition, as defined in the text of the Council of Trent, is an act of the virtue of Penance, and indeed an elicited and proper act, as well as its primary or formal act. Secondly, for the completion of this inquiry, a subtler question is added: in which of the three elements expressed in the foregoing definition does contrition itself formally consist—in sorrow, rather than detestation, or in the purpose? Thirdly, it is asked whether, besides contrition, there are other acts elicited, and not merely commanded, by the virtue of Penance.[174]

[174] Council of Trent, session 14, chapter 4; cf. the Council of Florence, Decree for the Armenians, in which mention of detestation is omitted.

NEGATIVE POSITION AND AFFIRMATIVE POSITION

In resolving these questions there are certain disagreements among theologians; these, however, chiefly bear upon the question of the formal object, to be discussed in the following article.

ON THE FIRST AND PRINCIPAL QUESTION

Several theologians, with Vázquez (here, on article 2, single doubt, no. 17 and following), introduce a slight disagreement with the more common opinion. They teach that contrition is not the primary and formal act of Penance, and indeed is not elicited by it. They hold that the formal act of Penance is only the will to make compensation, whereas the act of sorrow or detestation which is joined with it belongs to the virtue of charity. Thus the two acts, although they are connected—and the first even commands the other—nevertheless do not coalesce into one, nor are they intrinsically subordinate to

one another after the manner of intention and choice proceeding from the same virtue, but belong to distinct virtues concurring in one matter.

Lugo writes in support of this position:

"It is now the opinion of many that the formal motive of Penance is the good of compensation; hence the principal act of this virtue is to will to make compensation, or to render satisfaction to God for an offense, on account of the proper good which it finds in doing this, namely in making compensation or satisfaction. From this they infer ... that this virtue does not elicit an act of sorrow or retraction concerning past sins, because such an act could not have as its formal motive the good of compensation: for past sins are not opposed to future compensation, but on the contrary are required in order that some compensation may subsequently be made. Therefore, if this virtue had to make a judgment concerning them, it ought rather to will that they had occurred, so that there might be an occasion for making compensation, than merely to will formally the making of that compensation. Yet they say that Penance commands retraction, and that sorrow is to be elicited, not by itself, but by other virtues, namely by charity, hope, religion, and others: for it chooses those acts of sorrow and retraction as useful and necessary means to its own end, namely compensation and satisfaction for sins. This is the proper object of Penance, and by it Penance receives a sufficient distinction by which it differs from the other virtues."[175]

[175] Lugo, *Disputationes scholasticae*, vol. 4, On Penance, disputation 2, section 2, no. 16 (Paris, 1892), p. 379.

Among modern theologians Billot chooses the same opinion, writing:

"It is easy to distinguish the proper act of Penance, which, that is, has a special praiseworthiness because it is an act of Penance, from the commanded acts in which the special worthiness of this virtue shines forth only insofar as they are assumed for its end. For the proper act, which is otherwise usually called elicited, is the will to do that which destroys the offense, making compensation for it both formally and materially. But because this compensation cannot be exhibited except through the acts of other virtues, Penance therefore orders all these to its object; and so sorrow for sin from a motive of charity, confession and humble submission to God offended, prayer, abstinence, almsgiving, and other such things will be commanded acts of the virtue of Penance [cf. In IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiunc. 3, reply to objection 2]. Something similar is apparent in human affairs, where an injury is repaired through an act of courtesy, observance, respect, submission, and the like. But the very will to make reparation and to order the aforementioned acts toward the end of reparation has the special worthiness of commutative justice, and to this the elicited act in the present case corresponds. "Nevertheless, it must be observed that certain acts, although proceeding elicitedly from other virtues, by their own intrinsic character nevertheless manifest the exercised will to satisfy God and destroy the offense against Him. Of this kind generally is the act of sorrow and detestation of sin which is called contrition. For although contrition belongs to charity when it is conceived from the motive of loving God above all things, or otherwise claims for itself the various worthinesses [that is, virtues] when it has lower motives, nevertheless, since it is directly and essentially opposed to sin as an offense against God, it always constitutes, whether perfectly or imperfectly, that compensation which Penance seeks to manifest. Hence it always manifests, at least in the act exercised, the will to give satisfaction to God offended. And this is the reason why contrition is understood to belong more to Penance than the other commanded acts; for prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and other similar acts are certainly more readily directed to the end of Penance, but they

do not possess this direction actually from themselves alone, unless a special intention of the agent be added."[176]

[176] Billot, *De sacramentis*, vol. 2, thesis 6, section 2 (Rome, 1930), p. 64 ff.

ON THE SECOND AND SUBORDINATE QUESTION

Some say, in the first place, that the act of detestation is not distinguished from the act of sorrow, but that the act of purpose is distinguished from both. For the first two regard past sin, whereas purpose regards the future. The common opinion, however, admits a distinction even between detestation and sorrow, on account of their differing formal objects and consequently their separability, as is evident in the blessed, who detest their past sins but can no longer grieve over them.

Furthermore, some, such as Cajetan and especially Suárez (*Disputation* 3, section 4, no. 6), teach that contrition formally consists not in sorrow but in detestation, because detestation is the very cause and root of sorrow, and because detestation, but not sorrow, is a free act. Others, such as Gonet (*Disputation* 7, article 1), Billuart, Hugon, and Diekamp, teach that it formally consists in sorrow (presuppositively, however, in detestation; and consequently in the purpose), because this accords better with traditional usage and with the nature of Penance. Others again, such as St. Alphonsus (no. 434), Billot (thesis 12, section 1), Galtier (nos. 52–54), Pesch (no. 113), Gihr (section 13), and Hervé (no. 255), say that it consists formally in both acts of detestation and sorrow, on account of the arguments advanced for either opinion, although principally in detestation, for the reasons of the first opinion. Others, such as Lugo (*Disputation* 4, section 1, no. 6), say that this is a question about the manner of speaking and that either of the foregoing positions can be maintained, because Penance is not found in detestation without sorrow, as is apparent in the blessed, nor in sorrow apart from detestation, from which sorrow derives its freedom and moral character.

Cajetan explains the matter as follows, in his *Questions on Contrition*, first question, no. 2 (Leonine edition of the Works of St. Thomas, volume 12, p. 341): "Attrition signifies imperfect displeasure at sin; contrition, however, signifies perfect displeasure at sin. And the discussion concerns mortal sin. Observe, however, that I say displeasure, and do not say sorrow or sadness. For contrition properly signifies displeasure, which is the cause of sadness or sorrow, although in frequent usage contrition is said to be sorrow, the effect being indicated through the cause. But how great is the difference between displeasure and sadness, which is in the will, the state of the heavenly fatherland clearly shows: in it the saints will be displeased at sins formerly committed by them, yet will have no sadness over them. For from the fact that in the fatherland there will be displeasure and will not be sadness, it plainly follows that the sadness itself which is in the will is not essentially displeasure. But upon displeasure sadness follows in those who are capable of sadness."

For a better understanding of the opinion of Suárez (from which especially arose the opinion of the modern writers mentioned above who say that contrition does not consist primarily in sorrow itself) and of his disagreement with the mind of St. Thomas, to be addressed at the end of Conclusion II, observe that he distinguishes four acts which are in some way involved in contrition: hatred of sin (the act of fleeing sin considered absolutely, as distinct from sin committed), detestation or displeasure at sin (the act of fleeing a sin committed and pertaining to oneself), sorrow (a positive act of sadness, arising therefrom), and the intention of destroying a sin committed. The first three stand to each other as hatred, to which detestation or the desire that sin had not been committed is

opposed, and joy, to which sorrow or sadness is opposed. He says, however, that contrition essentially consists in detestation alone, while the remaining three, not excluding the intention of destroying sins insofar as they are distinguished from detestation, are extrinsic to it and concomitant.

Three things in this opinion are displeasing. First, the distinction between hatred and detestation is improperly assigned, since either of these acts of appetite can refer both to sin taken absolutely and to sin committed by the subject. Secondly, and more seriously, the essence of contrition and Penance is improperly placed in a negative act, or one of flight; for, as was said in the preceding article (reply to objection 12), the principal act of Penance, like that of every virtue properly so called, is the positive act of pursuing some good. Thirdly and especially, it is improperly denied that the intention of destroying or repairing sin is essential to contrition, whereas on the contrary, according to St. Thomas, the most formal character of Penance is found in this intention, as will be more fully explained in the following article. Hence Suárez, while rightly rejecting the position of Vázquez, falls into the opposite error. According to St. Thomas the whole essence of the act of Penance must be found in reparative or satisfactory detestation or sorrow—against Vázquez, who separates the former from the latter, and against Suárez, who separates the latter from the former.

Here are some words of Suárez establishing his conclusion:

"It remains to explain which of the acts of Penance enumerated above is contrition; and in particular inquiry may be made concerning those four acts, namely the will to destroy a committed sin, hatred of sin, detestation of it, and sorrow over it. And it must be said briefly that contrition formally, and (so to speak) directly, is that very detestation; the remaining acts, however, either regularly accompany it, or precede it, or follow it, and are always included in it virtually; nevertheless they are not of the substance of contrition, nor always necessary to it, insofar as they are formally or really distinct from detestation itself. "Thus is taken from the common teaching of theologians [?], St. Thomas [?] here [q. 85, a. 1], in the following article, but especially in the solutions to the arguments, and in the question above, article 8, and in IV Sentences, distinction 17, question 2; and from other authors, including Alexander of Hales, part 4, question 17, member 1; Cajetan, volume 1, *Opuscula*, tractate 4, question 1; and Vega, book 13 on Trent, chapter 25. And it is briefly proved from what has been said above, for contrition is the most proper and most perfect act of Penance; but such an act consists in detestation, as proved above; therefore. Again, contrition produces sorrow, as the Council of Trent signifies, session 14, chapter 4, when it defines contrition through detestation and sorrow; and it is established by all theologians and by the common understanding of everyone. It also produces an affection of punishing and avenging guilt in oneself ...; but these are the proper effects of detestation and displeasure at a committed sin; therefore. Finally, contrition rends the heart, Joel 2, separating it from attachment to a committed sin; but this is done principally and formally through detestation; therefore."[177]

[177] Suárez, *De Poenitentia*, disputation 4, section 1, no. 4, *Opera omnia*, vol. 22 (Paris, 1886), p. 71 ff.; cf. ibid., nos. 5–7; also disputation 3, section 2, nos. 6–9; section 4, nos. 2–3, 6.

ON THE THIRD QUESTION

As regards the third question, certain theologians depart from the more common opinion, holding, or seeming to hold, that contrition alone is an act elicited by the virtue of Penance, while the other acts, namely confession and satisfaction, are only acts commanded by it. Indeed, Vázquez, Billot, and

others, who teach in the first question mentioned above that the formal act of Penance is the will to make compensation, add that this alone is an act elicited by Penance, while the other acts, including contrition itself, are only commanded acts (cf. Billot, cited above at pp. 336 ff.).

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion I

The primary elicited act of Penance is contrition, or "sorrow of soul and detestation for sin committed, together with the purpose of not sinning henceforth."

Proof 1. From Scripture and Tradition

As is clear from the testimonies already cited in Article X and from those to be adduced in the following article (p. 382 ff.), the act of Penance is consistently described as sorrow of soul and detestation for sin. Moreover, it is manifest that this sorrow of soul is an elicited and primary act of Penance; otherwise these testimonies would have been spoken most unadvisedly, since they would insist upon some extrinsic or secondary act and would pass over in silence the innermost character of this virtue.

Moreover, the Council of Trent, in Session XIV, chapter 4 (cited above at p. 264), collecting the sense of Tradition and pointing out its signs, explicitly says that contrition, or sorrow of soul and detestation, "holds the first place among the aforesaid acts of the penitent," and that all the acts of penance expressed throughout Scripture have the detestation of sin as their cause and root, or proceed "from a certain hatred of one's past life and a great detestation of sins."

In agreement with this, the Catechism of the Council of Trent, part 2, chapter 5, question 4 (cited above at p. 265), says that "interior penance" is the detestation and hatred of sins, and that for this reason the Fathers define penance by this sorrow.

Proof 2. From the Very Nature and End of Penance

Since Penance is the immediate disposition for justification, its elicited and primary act must be that which operates primarily and formally for the removal of sin. But such an act is the act of contrition, and this alone; for, as was said against the Protestants in Article X (pp. 266 ff.), a contrary is expelled by its contrary. Now the contrary of aversion from God and conversion to a creature, in which sin consists, is the conversion of the will to God and aversion from the creature, in which sorrow and detestation for sin consist.

Proof 3. From the Exclusion of Every Other Act and the Unsuitability of Vázquez's Opinion

No other act besides contrition can be assigned as the elicited and primary act of the virtue of Penance. The acts of satisfaction and confession are indeed elicited by the virtue of Penance (cf. below, Articles XXXV and XLVII), but neither is primary, since they do not furnish the principal compensation for sin, which consists in conversion of heart. The act of love of God considered in itself is an act commanded by Penance but elicited by charity. Acts of love, delight, and joy having the act of Penance itself as their object do not constitute that act but presuppose it: they are either elicited by another virtue, as joy over the act of Penance is elicited by charity, or are merely certain modalities of the very act of the penitential will, reflecting upon itself; or they are subsequent and secondary acts elicited by the virtue of Penance under its own proper reparative character and end.

It is wholly inappropriate, moreover, for our opponents to introduce the *will to make compensation*, distinct from sorrow and detestation, as the elicited and primary act of Penance.

First, if the will to make compensation is conceived as separated from sorrow and detestation, it is not opposed to sin, as our opponents themselves frankly admit, according to Lugo's explanation given above. Therefore it cannot be the act of Penance, whose entire character is derived from opposition to sin. In human affairs a man is not said to repent of an injury inflicted upon another merely because he wishes to offer some compensation for it, such as a sum of money.

Secondly, if the will to make compensation, conceived as distinct from sorrow, were established as the proper act of Penance, there would be introduced, contrary to every common and traditional understanding, a virtue of Penance that would in no way grieve for sin, however much such sorrow might be said to be required and imposed through some other virtue. "The virtue [of Penance], according to that manner of speaking, aims only formally to make satisfaction to God, by offering the compensation required for the offense; not because Penance itself hates sin, but because it loves the good of compensation for sins. Consequently ... the virtue of Penance, speaking of itself, does not imply hatred of sin, but only love of compensation: for I can quite well wish to discharge a debt in full, and nevertheless not grieve over the debt I contracted; thus a man who buys a book wishes to pay for the book, and does not grieve that he contracted that debt."[178]

[178] Lugo, *Disputationes scholasticae*, vol. 4, *De Poenitentia*, disputation 2, section 4, no. 44 (Paris, 1892), p. 389.

Thirdly and especially, the will truly to make compensation for sin cannot be conceived absolutely as separated from sorrow and detestation, since compensation for sin cannot consist in anything other than sorrow and detestation, as was explained in the preceding article (p. 301). This directly overturns Vázquez's opinion on the very argument from which it proceeds. For if the primary act elicited by Penance is the will to make compensation, but compensation is effected only by sorrow, then the will to make compensation is also the will to grieve; consequently sorrow is necessarily and essentially involved in the primary act of Penance, and is elicited by that same virtue.

You Will Say

Compensation and sorrow are not the same formal character or the same object, but two objects, one of which stands to the other as a means and the other as an end. For sorrow is not compensation; rather, compensation is accomplished through sorrow. Consequently, the will to make compensation and the will to grieve are not the same act, but two distinct acts, of which the former is an intention of the end and the latter the choice of a means. The preceding argument therefore has no force; indeed, on its own terms, these three propositions remain: first, that the will to compensate and the compensatory sorrow itself are two distinct acts; secondly, that the will to compensate is the primary act of Penance, inasmuch as it is an intention of the end, while sorrow is merely secondary, inasmuch as it is a choice of a means; thirdly, that the will to compensate is an act elicited by Penance, since it is an intention of the end, while sorrow is an act commanded by Penance and elicited by another virtue, since it is the choice of a means.

Reply

Compensation and sorrow are not properly two objects, but two inseparable aspects of one and the same object. For compensation for sin is accomplished only through sorrow for sin, and is not really distinguished from that sorrow, but is rather a certain quality or property of it, consisting in a certain

relation of equality to the offense. Accordingly compensation and sorrow are not properly two objects ordered to one another as an end and a means, but two aspects of the same reality, indivisibly connected with one another and in a certain way incapable of being separated. Thus it is the same reality, considered from different standpoints, which is sorrowful compensation and compensatory sorrow.

These objective conditions, under the same character and proportion, pass over into the conditions of the act of the will, whose entire nature is determined by the object. Therefore the will to make compensation for sin and the will to grieve for it are not two distinct acts, but one single act, which is the will for sorrowful compensation, or for compensatory sorrow. This single act indeed possesses two formalities, subordinated to one another in a certain way: for as a movement of the will considered as beginning from sorrow, through which it attains satisfaction, it bears the character of an act of choice; but considered as directly regarding satisfaction itself, it bears the character of an act of intention.

From this it follows that there is, strictly speaking, no priority and posteriority between the will to make compensation and the will to grieve, since they mutually include one another, as do their objects. Or, if one prefers, there is a priority and posteriority in both acts with respect to the other, though in a different order, as occurs between acts of intention and choice. Thus the will to grieve is said to precede in the order of execution, but the will to compensate in the order of intention; for the will of one who repents begins by grieving so that he may thereby make compensation, and begins by intending compensation so that he may therefore grieve.

From this it follows, with even greater force, that both the will to make compensation and the will to grieve proceed from the same virtue, since they are formally a single act. Moreover, even if they were two distinct acts, one the act of intention and the other the act of choice, it would not follow that they belonged to distinct virtues. For the same virtue can possess several acts subordinate to one another (as is evident even in the purpose of not sinning, which proceeds subordinately from the same virtue as the act of sorrow), and can regard an end and the means to it through different acts within the same order.

To that argument upon which the objector relies along with Vázquez, namely that *the act of intention and the act of choice are really distinct*, the Salmanticenses aptly reply:

"As we have said in the treatise on the Last End, disputation 3, doubt 1, no. 19, and doubt 2, no. 40, intention and choice are not always really distinct, because intention does not always concern the ultimate end, nor does choice always concern means precisely under the character of means. This occurs especially when there appears in the object a moral goodness subordinate to another good. Hence, under this aspect the same will might intend sorrowful compensation: under the character of compensation it would be an intention, and insofar as it is sorrowful it would take on the office of choice. Yet even if it were granted that they really differ, nothing would follow for the objector, because a particular intention and the equally particular choice of a means in relation to that end are not incompatible with the character of one and the same virtue. Nor is it incompatible with one virtue to have several subordinate acts, as are in fact found in Penance: for, beyond the detestation mentioned above, it also elicits the purpose of not sinning hereafter, as St. Thomas has said above."

"Nor does it matter that a virtue is essentially a habit of choice, whereas choice presupposes intention: for that definition must be verified with reference to the universal end of the will, in relation to which, and for the confirmation of the will concerning it, acts of virtue are means. Nevertheless, with this it is consistent that particular virtues claim ends proper to themselves, and consequently particular intentions in their own matter. Indeed, this is so even if there must be a reflexive order, in which no act is without being an intention, consent, choice, and use of itself, as we have seen from St. Thomas in [disputation 2, doubt 2] on Predestination. The Holy Doctor likewise teaches in I–II, question 16, article 4: 'Because acts of the will are reflected upon themselves, in any act of the will consent, choice, and use may be found: as when it is said that the will consents to its choosing, and consents to its consenting, and uses itself for consenting and choosing.'"[179]

[179] Salmanticenses, *De Poenitentia*, disputation 5, doubt 2, § 2, no. 48, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 19 (Paris, 1883), p. 400.

Conclusion II

The three acts which, according to the description given by the Council of Trent, are in some manner involved in the act of contrition—namely, sorrow, hatred, and purpose—(1) are acts elicited by Penance; (2) are distinct from one another; (3) are so subordinated to one another that sorrow alone formally constitutes contrition and, therefore, strictly speaking, it alone is the primary and formal act of the virtue of Penance.

The conclusion is proved in its several parts.

PART I. SORROW, HATRED, AND PURPOSE ARE ACTS ELICITED BY THE VIRTUE OF PENANCE ITSELF

Since contrition is an act elicited by Penance, it follows that at least one of these three acts is an elicited act. Indeed, no doubt is possible concerning sorrow, since Tradition constantly defines Penance chiefly through sorrow; indeed, as will presently be said, sorrow formally constitutes contrition itself. Concerning hatred, however, doubt might arise precisely because it precedes sorrow, which is primary, and therefore the first act of Penance. Yet hatred too is elicited by Penance, insofar as it is elicited by the will from an intention of making satisfaction, and in fact under a twofold consideration, to be explained below in the reply to Suárez's objection.

Finally, one might have still greater doubts about the purpose of amendment, because this concerns another object, namely future sin. Nevertheless, that purpose too is an elicited act, although a secondary one, because it proceeds immediately from the very will to repent, or to destroy sin. Sin already committed is destroyed first and principally by its being taken away individually in the sinner himself, and subsequently, or secondarily, by its being prevented from returning under another aspect or through another individual occurrence.

PART II. SORROW, HATRED, AND PURPOSE ARE THREE ACTS DISTINCT FROM ONE ANOTHER

No one doubts that the purpose of avoiding future sins is really distinct from the two preceding acts, since it has a distinct proximate object: future sin, or, if one prefers, the futurity of sin. The distinction between hatred and sorrow also appears readily, both from their nature and from their formal object. For although both concern past sin, sorrow regards it as an evil committed by the subject himself and under the aspect of an aggressive movement against it, while hatred does not necessarily regard it as committed by the subject, and considers it under the aspect of flight or aversion.

Their distinction is likewise apparent from their separability. For hatred of a sin committed by oneself can exist without sorrow, as is clear concerning the blessed, who utterly detest their past sins, but cannot grieve over them on account of their state of beatitude.

PART III. SORROW ALONE FORMALLY CONSTITUTES THE ACT OF CONTRITION, OR THE FORMAL AND PRIMARY ACT OF PENANCE

The purpose of not sinning again, since it regards sin as future, cannot be the primary act of Penance, which regards sin primarily and of itself as already committed and to be destroyed; it extends to preventing its recurrence only consequentially, through a certain inclination shared with the virtue of Prudence, by which Penance itself is regulated. Moreover, contrition is not said to be contrition concerning future sin, but rather caution regarding it: caution proceeds within the virtue of Penance through the influence and fruitfulness of prudence.

St. Thomas aptly explains this in *Supplement*, question 2, article 4:

"In all ordered movers and things moved, the inferior mover has its proper motion, and besides this follows the motion of a superior mover; as is seen in the motion of the planets, which, besides their proper motions, follow the motion of the first sphere. In all moral virtues the first mover is prudence, which is called the charioteer of the virtues. And therefore every moral virtue, together with its proper motion, has something of the motion of prudence. Hence, since Penance is a moral virtue, because it is a part of justice, along with its proper act it follows the motion of prudence. Its proper act, however, is directed to its proper object, which is sin committed. Therefore its proper and principal act, namely contrition, according to its species regards only past sin; but consequentially it regards future sin, inasmuch as it has something of the act of prudence joined to it; and yet it is not moved toward that future sin according to the character of its own species. For this reason the one who is contrite grieves over past sin and guards against future sin. But it is not said that there is contrition for future sin, but rather caution, which is a part of prudence joined to contrition." (Cf. *In IV Sent.*, distinction 14, question 1, article 1, questions 6 and 4.)

Nor can hatred, or detestation of sin, be the formal and primary act of Penance, since the primary and formal characteristics of Penance are lacking in it. For hatred does not formally regard sin as committed by the subject himself; rather, it abstracts from this condition and relation, as is evident from the fact that hatred can exist even in the impeccable will of Christ's humanity. It is not a positive act of attack, working toward the destruction of sin, but a negative act of flight. It is not a satisfaction or compensation for sin, since it takes nothing from the sinner himself to offer to God. Nor is it a punishment which the sinner inflicts upon himself, in accordance with the original meaning of the word Penance (cf. above, pp. 5 ff.). It is not a breaking of the heart or a softening of the hardness of the soul according to the etymological meaning of contrition. Nor, finally, is it something incompatible with the state of the blessed, among whom nevertheless there is no proper and specific act of Penance.

You Will Say (with Suárez and Others), I

Detestation is a free act, whereas sorrow is not free but necessarily follows from detestation. Therefore the formal act of Penance, which is an elective habit, is not sorrow but hatred or detestation.

Reply

We do not say that just any sorrow, or sorrow considered in any way whatsoever, is the formal act of Penance, but sorrow freely undertaken from an intention of making satisfaction, in the manner explained in Conclusion I (pp. 341 ff.) against Vázquez. St. Thomas expressly teaches this in question 85, article 1 (cited in Article XII, pp. 287 ff., and below) and in *Supplement*, question 1, article 1: "Contrition is a voluntary sorrow for sin, punishing in some respect that which one grieves to have committed"; likewise, "sorrow ... undertaken." (Cf. the entire passage quoted below.)

You Will Say, II

Hatred of sin is the first act elicited by Penance, for it precedes sorrow and is its cause. But the first act of a virtue is also its primary act, since it is the root of the others. Therefore hatred is the primary act of Penance, and contrition formally consists in it.

The minor premise is argued from St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, I–II, question 28, article 4: "A virtue, as has been said above (I–II, question 55, articles 2 and 4), is an operative habit, and therefore by its proper nature it has an inclination toward some act. But it is contingent that several acts, ordered according to reason, proceed from one habit, one of which follows from another. And because the later acts do not proceed from the habit of the virtue except through an earlier act, it follows that the virtue is not defined or denominated from the later act, although other acts also follow from it. This is clear from what was said above about the passions (I–II, question 25, articles 2 and 4): love is the first affection of the appetitive power, from which desire and joy follow. And therefore the very habit of the virtue is that which inclines one to love the beloved good, to desire it, and to rejoice in it. But since love is prior among these acts, the virtue is not named from joy or desire but from love; and it is called charity."

Reply

The weight of this objection must not be concealed. Some Thomists, for example Gonet, Billuart, and Hugon, seem to grant it when they teach that contrition consists formally in sorrow alone, but presuppositively in hatred and consequentially in purpose. It would follow from their position that either hatred is not an elicited act of Penance—which is entirely unsuitable, because then not all of contrition, as defined by the Council of Trent, would in any sense be an elicited act of Penance—or else the first act is not its primary and formal act, which seems to contradict the doctrine of St. Thomas in the passage cited.

Someone could answer the objection by conceding the major premise and denying the minor premise understood universally. For it can be conceived that, in order to elicit its primary act, a virtue must first elicit a certain secondary act which is required as the condition, disposition, or root of the former. Thus, since sorrow cannot be elicited unless hatred has preceded it, one may understand Penance as eliciting its primary act of sorrow through an intention in whose execution it tends toward the prior eliciting of hatred. This explanation could be supported by conceiving hatred as an immediate disposition for sorrow, for an immediate disposition both precedes and follows the form in different orders of causes—material and formal. Nevertheless, this answer appears more ingenious and elaborate than in accord with the doctrine of St. Thomas expressed in the text cited.

It is therefore better to reply by conceding the minor premise and denying the major premise.

For the first act elicited by Penance is not hatred of sin but sorrow itself over sin. For although hatred of sin precedes sorrow and generates it in its physical being, nevertheless it does not precede or generate sorrow in the moral being of satisfaction and Penance, but rather follows upon sorrow in this respect.

Three preliminary observations are necessary to understand this. First, in a praiseworthy or virtuous act, its physical substance must be distinguished from the reason for its praiseworthiness or morality —or, if one prefers, its physical essence from its moral essence. Second, an act is elicited by the habit of a virtue not according to the physical essence presupposed by it (for thus it is elicited by the power alone and raised through the infused habit itself), but according to its moral essence, inasmuch as the act imposes upon its physical essence an ordering toward its end or the form of its rationality and morality. Third, it follows from this that one virtue can elicit, under one moral aspect, the same physical act that is elicited by another virtue under another moral aspect. Indeed, it follows that one virtue, residing in one power, can elicit in its proper moral order an act physically elicited by another power. More generally, several acts of which one is the cause of another in the order of physical elicitation do not necessarily preserve the same relation and subordination in the order of moral elicitation. Thus an act that is first and a cause in physical being may be second and an effect in moral being, if the character which the virtue formally considers is found primarily and principally in the act which is physically caused by another and only secondarily in that other act.[180]

[180] On all these matters compare Gonet, John of St. Thomas, and the Salmanticenses, cited below in Article 35.

Applying this to the present subject, we say:

First

Each one of the three acts out of which contrition is composed—hatred, sorrow, and purpose—is indeed one act in the physical order, but twofold in the moral order, since hatred, sorrow, and purpose can be elicited by charity under its proper formal character, and hatred, sorrow, and purpose can be elicited by Penance under another formal character. Hence a twofold hatred of sin must be distinguished: one, hatred of sin as contrary to the supreme lovable Good, elicited by charity; the other, hatred of sin as contrary to the supreme Good offended and needing to be appeased, elicited by Penance.

To the point are these words of the Salmanticenses:

"Granted that hatred of sin as opposed to the divine good, which is proper to Charity, is presupposed in [contrition], nevertheless the aforesaid hatred does not arise from a motive of making satisfaction; room therefore remains for another compensatory hatred, detesting sin under another character than the former. ... For, as Cano profoundly and elegantly taught in *De Poenitentia*, part 2, conclusion, 'different formal motives of the will are different formal characters of objects; and consequently they effect different habits and virtues.' And so giving money to Peter, considered in itself absolutely, has no praiseworthiness; but if you give it to relieve his misery, it is an act of mercy; if to do good to him, an act of benevolence and friendship; if as a gratuitous gift, an act of liberality; but if you pay a debt from a contract, it pertains to justice. Likewise, to assume sorrow over sin because it is, absolutely speaking, an evil against God, belongs to Charity; but that one grieves and laments over the same sin as an injury and offense against God, with the intention of appeasing Him and of making satisfaction to Him insofar as possible, is an act of another virtue, inferior to Charity. Therefore hatred of sin as

an offense against God is indeed an act of Charity and of Penance: of the latter as the proximate principle eliciting it; of the former as the principle commanding and applying it, as superior acts upon inferior. Hence the proposition of [Vázquez], that 'hatred of sin as an offense against God is essentially love of God,' is false, no less than this one: 'the act of almsgiving is essentially an act of Charity,' because it is commanded by Charity; even if it admits a true meaning, this is only that it is love of God radically and by way of command, not formally. For true contrition and detestation of sin are founded upon love of God and commanded by it, because on account of God Himself, as the supreme good in Himself."[181]

[181] Salmanticenses, *De Poenitentia*, disputation 5, doubt 2, § 2, no. 47, *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 19 (Paris, 1883), pp. 398 ff.

Second

The three acts out of which contrition is composed—namely, hatred of sin, sorrow, and purpose—considered in their physical being have such an order that hatred is the cause and root of sorrow and is the first act elicited by the will. But if they are considered in the moral order, a distinction must be made. For these same three acts can be elicited both by charity and by Penance under the proper finality and morality of each virtue, that is, under the aspect of love or under the aspect of satisfaction. Accordingly, insofar as they are elicited by charity, they retain in fact the same order which they possess in the physical order: for the formal act of charity is love of God, under whose aspect hatred of sin is conceived, and this is the root of sorrow and consequently of purpose.[182] But insofar as they are elicited by Penance, their order is in some way reversed: thus sorrow is the first elicited act, while hatred and purpose are subsequent acts. For that which Penance formally seeks is the character of satisfaction; and because it finds this first and principally in sorrow alone, it elicits this act immediately, whereas it elicits the acts of hatred and purpose subsequently, under the same character of satisfaction, which is found in them to some extent and is derived from their connection with sorrow—inasmuch as hatred is the cause of sorrow in its physical being and in the moral being of charity, and purpose is the completing effect of sorrow.

[182] This act of hatred is not altogether identical with the act of love proceeding from the same charity, as some wrongly suppose; rather, it is a subsequent act, really distinct from the former. On this St. Thomas, I–II, question 29, article 2, says: "Love consists in a certain agreement of the lover with the beloved; but hatred consists in a certain repugnance or disagreement. Now in anything one must first consider what agrees before considering what disagrees, because something is repugnant to another insofar as it corrupts or impedes what agrees with it. Therefore it is necessary that love be prior to hatred and that nothing be hated except through being opposed to what is loved." (Cf. ibid., ad 1, 2 and 3.)

Hence charity grieves over sin because it hates it, whereas Penance, conversely, hates sin because it grieves over it. Charity grieves and hates because it loves; Penance hates and grieves because it makes satisfaction. Thus the subordination of Penance to charity also becomes apparent: Penance begins from sorrow, while charity begins from hatred, which physically precedes sorrow; indeed, charity begins from love, which is the beginning of human acts.

Furthermore, besides the aforesaid formal hatred of sin, which is a secondary act elicited by Penance, another hatred of sin can be distinguished as contained eminently within the primary elicited act of this virtue and involved in the act of sorrow itself.

For since the first and fundamental act of the will, implicitly contained in every order of voluntary acts, is love,[183] from which hatred of the contrary follows, the act of sorrow includes in itself, or is

identified with, love of the good of compensating for the divine right; and thus it includes the contrary hatred, namely, hatred of not making compensation or of not grieving. This hatred is not distinguished from the sorrow itself except by the secondary character of the will's virtual reflection upon its own acts—a reflection which, as stated above, is proper to the will. Moreover, as observed in the preceding article (in reply to Objections IX and X), St. Thomas says that Penance is formally opposed not to every sin but only to that which is impenitence, or the will not to make compensation or not to grieve for sin. In addition, within this hatred of not compensating or not grieving for sin, there is contained eminently the formal hatred of sin itself, which, as has been said above, is a secondary act elicited by Penance. For one who hates the absence of compensation loves compensation; one who wills to make compensation wills to grieve; and one who wills to grieve wills to hate sin, since without such hatred sorrow is not generated. But all this again pertains to the aforesaid virtual and inexhaustible reflection of the will upon itself.

[183] Cf. the statements made in Article XII, pp. 317 ff.

This eminent containment of the act of hatred of sin in the very act of sorrow, on the one hand, and the aforesaid secondary character of the act of hatred, on the other, are the reasons why St. Thomas, when he speaks of contrition and Penance, proposes only two distinct acts, namely sorrow for what has been committed (for which he sometimes substitutes detestation or displeasure, which accordingly signify the same thing as sorrow), and the purpose of avoiding sin in the future.

It remains, therefore, that sorrow over sin itself is the formal and primary act of Penance, in which, consequently, contrition formally consists.

The Council of Florence itself places sorrow first and directly among the two acts by which it defines contrition; for, omitting mention of detestation, it defines contrition thus: "Sorrow for sin committed, with the purpose of not sinning again."

The Council of Trent likewise places sorrow first and directly among the three acts by which contrition is described.

Finally, so consistently and significantly does all Tradition define Penance through sorrow that Penance itself is frequently defined through sorrow alone (compare the definitions both of contrition and of the virtue of Penance which are to be adduced in the following article, pp. 382 ff.).

St. Thomas himself presents sorrow as the substance and genus of contrition, expressly abstracting from detestation or hatred and from purpose (compare what follows).

In itself, moreover, sorrow gathers up and displays all the characteristics and formal notes of the virtue of Penance. For it regards sin as committed by the subject himself; it is a positive act of attack, operating toward the destruction of sin by crushing the spirit and troubling the heart; it is a kind of satisfaction and compensation for sin, since the sinner takes something from himself and gives it back to God: "In compensation for the divine offense thou shalt offer a contrite spirit unto God" (*In IV Sent.*, distinction 14, question 2, article 1, question 1). It is a certain inward infliction of punishment, or a voluntary chastisement; it is a certain analogous breaking, whereby the hardness of the heart is crushed and the adhesion of the soul to sin is torn apart, when the sinner's mind is wrenched away from its own judgment, or from pride, the root of every sin. Finally, it is an act incompatible with the state of the blessed.

St. Thomas discloses the intimate nature of the act of contrition in the *Supplement*, question 1, article 1. There, explaining its etymological definition and discussing five of its actual definitions handed down by theologians and the Fathers, he constantly presents sorrow as the essential element:

"As is said in Ecclesiasticus 10:15, 'The beginning of every sin is pride,' through which man, adhering to his own judgment, withdraws from the divine commandments. Therefore whatever destroys sin must cause man to depart from his own judgment. But one who perseveres in his own judgment is called rigid and hard by analogy: just as something in material things is called hard because it does not yield to touch, so a man is called hard because he is not turned aside from his own judgment. Accordingly, when someone is said to be broken, he is understood to be severed from his own judgment. Yet between breaking and crushing, or contrition, in material things there is this difference, as is said in *Meteorology*, book IV, chapters 7 and 9: certain things are said to be broken when divided into large parts, but to be crushed, or ground down, when they are reduced to the smallest parts from what was solid. And because the complete putting away of sin requires that a man entirely abandon his attachment to sin, which he possessed through a certain continuity and solidity in his own judgment, for this reason the act by which sin is put away is called contrition by a likeness."

"In this contrition several things may be considered, namely the very substance of the act, its manner of being done, its principle, and its effect. Corresponding to these, different definitions of contrition are found to have been handed down."

"Thus, as regards the very substance of the act, the aforesaid definition is given: 'Sorrow undertaken for sins, with the purpose of confessing and making satisfaction.'[184] And because the act of contrition is an act of virtue and a part of the sacrament of Penance, this is shown in the foregoing definition insofar as it is an act of virtue, by the statement of its genus, namely 'sorrow'; its object, by the expression 'for sins'; and the choice required for an act of virtue, by the word 'undertaken.' But insofar as it is part of a sacrament, this is shown by reference to its order toward the other parts, in the phrase 'with the purpose of confessing and making satisfaction.'"

[184] Thus St. Raymond of Peñafort, *Summa de Poenitentia et Remissione*, § 4; Alexander of Hales, *Summa*, part 4, question 17, member 1, article 3.

"Another definition is also found which defines contrition insofar as it is an act of virtue alone; but to the foregoing definition there is added the difference contracting it to a special virtue, namely Penance. For it says: 'Contrition is voluntary sorrow for sin, whereby one punishes in oneself that which one grieves to have committed.'[185] In the addition 'punishes,' contrition is contracted to the special virtue."

[185] Pseudo-Augustine, *De vera et falsa poenitentia*, chapters 8 and 19; cited above, pp. 5 and 233 ff.

"Another definition is found in Isidore,[186] which is as follows: 'Contrition is compunction and humility of mind with tears, arising from the remembrance of sin and fear of judgment.' This touches upon the reason for the name when it says 'humility of mind'; for just as someone is made rigid by pride in his own judgment, so, by withdrawing from his own judgment, he is humbled. It also touches on the exterior manner when it says 'with tears,' and on the principle of contrition when it says 'arising from the remembrance of sin,' and so forth."

[186] *De summo bono*, book 2, chapter 12.

"Another is taken from the words of Augustine [*On Psalm 46*, before the middle], and touches on the effect of contrition: 'Contrition is sorrow remitting sin.'"

"Another is taken from the words of Gregory [*Homilies on Ezekiel*, homily 22; *Moralia*, book 23, chapter 11 or 12]: 'Contrition is humility of spirit, annihilating sin between hope and fear.' This touches on the reason for the name by calling contrition 'humility of spirit'; on its effect by saying 'annihilating sin'; and on its origin by saying 'between hope and fear.' Nor does it indicate only the principal cause, which is fear, but also a concurrent cause, which is hope, without which fear could produce despair."

IT WILL BE HELPFUL TO MAKE THE MIND OF ST. THOMAS HIMSELF STILL CLEARER

This concerns the nature of the aforesaid three acts and their relations to one another.

1. Concerning Sorrow

The Holy Doctor consistently defines contrition formally under the aspect of sorrow:

Summa Theologiae, III, question 84, article 10, reply to objection 4: "To repent is to grieve over sins previously committed."

III, question 85, article 1, where the question concerns the definition of Penance directly: "To repent is to grieve over something formerly done by oneself. ... Sorrow or sadness ... insofar as it consists in the will ... is accompanied by a certain choice. ... The penitent undertakes a moderate sorrow for past sins with the intention of removing them." (Compare the reply to objection 3.)

III, question 85, article 3: "Penance ... has the character of a special virtue ... because the penitent grieves over a sin committed insofar as it is an offense against God, with the purpose of amendment."

Supplement, question 1, article 1, just quoted at length: "As to the very substance of the act, the aforesaid definition is given. ... [The act of contrition] is shown in the foregoing definition to be an act of virtue inasmuch as the genus itself is stated, namely 'sorrow'; and its object by the words 'for sins'; and the choice that is required for an act of virtue by the word 'undertaken.'"

In the same place he says that, in the other definition ("Voluntary sorrow for sin, punishing in oneself what one grieves to have committed"), the word "punishing" adds the difference which contracts sorrow to the species of the virtue of Penance.

Supplement, question 4, article 3: "In contrition three things must be considered: the first is the genus of contrition, which is sorrow ..."

In IV Sent., distinction 14, question 1, article 1, question 5, reply to objection 4: "Shame belongs to another genus than Penance, because shame is fear ... but Penance is sorrow." Compare the following article, pp. 365–367.

2. Concerning Detestation

The Holy Doctor, when making no mention of detestation, says that the act of Penance involves two things, namely sorrow and purpose (compare the discussion below concerning purpose).

When the Holy Doctor mentions the act of detestation or hatred and says that Penance consists in detestation, or displeasure, or reprobation, he manifestly identifies these with sorrow, although as

cause immediately connected with effect:

III, question 85, article 1, reply to objection 3: "To grieve over what has formerly been done, with the intention of striving that what has been done had not been, would be foolish. This, however, the penitent does not intend; rather his sorrow is displeasure with, or repudiation of, the deed previously committed, with the intention of removing its consequence, namely the offense against God and the debt of punishment; and this is not foolish."

III, question 85, article 2, reply to objection 1: "If ... in the act of the penitent one considers only displeasure [that is, sadness or sorrow] with past sin, this belongs immediately to charity, just as rejoicing over past good deeds does ..."

III, question 85, article 5, body: "The fifth act is a movement of charity, by which someone is displeased with sin in itself ..."

III, question 85, article 5, reply to objection 1: "Sin first begins to displease a man ... because of its proper punishments."

III, question 86, article 2: "Detestation of the turning [toward sin] ... and the purpose of amendment ... belong to the nature of Penance." (Compare III, question 85, article 3.)

Supplement, question 1, article 2, reply to objection 1: "There is another sorrow in the will, which is nothing other than displeasure with some evil according to the affection of the will; such things are called by the names of the passions, as was said in *In III Sent.*, distinction 26, question 1, article 5. And thus contrition is sorrow essentially, and it is an act of the virtue of Penance."

In IV Sent., distinction 14, question 1, article 1, question 3, passim.

In IV Sent., distinction 14, question 1, article 1, question 6, reply to objection 2: "If by weeping [or sorrow] is meant the act of Penance, then it denotes nothing other than detestation."

In IV Sent., distinction 14, question 1, article 1, question 6, reply to objection 6: "The definition of Ambrose ... that 'Penance is sorrow of heart and bitterness of soul over the evils which each person has committed' ... sets forth only one of the elements contained in the foregoing definitions, namely detestation of sin committed."

In IV Sent., distinction 17, question 2, article 2, question 2: "[Concerning original sin] there cannot properly speaking be contrition, but there can be displeasure concerning it, or sorrow."

In IV Sent., distinction 17, question 2, article 3, question 1, objection 4: "The sorrow of contrition is a certain displeasure."

In IV Sent., distinction 17, question 2, article 3, question 1: "In contrition there is a twofold sorrow. One is in the will itself, and this is essentially contrition itself, which is nothing other than displeasure with past sin. ... The other sorrow is in the sensitive part."

When the Holy Doctor distinguishes and opposes displeasure and sorrow, he does so only because he is setting forth the formal act of Penance:

III, question 84, article 8: "Interior ... Penance is that whereby a person grieves over a sin committed, and such Penance ought to endure to the end of life. For it ought always to displease a man that he has sinned; since if it pleased him that he had sinned, he would thereby already incur sin and lose the

fruit of pardon. But displeasure causes sorrow in one capable of sorrow, such as a man in this life. After this life, however, the saints are not capable of sorrow; hence their past sins will displease them without any sadness, according to Isaiah 65:16: 'The former distresses are delivered over to oblivion.'"

Hence the Holy Doctor adds in *Supplement*, question 4, article 3, that in them there is no contrition, because displeasure is not sorrow: "The souls ... who are in their homeland cannot have contrition, because they are without sorrow." (Compare III, question 84, article 8, cited below on p. 397.)

3. Concerning Purpose

Sometimes the Holy Doctor, when defining contrition through sorrow, makes no mention of any purpose (compare *Supplement*, question 1, article 1, and the other passages just cited).

When he introduces mention of purpose into that definition, he often and significantly speaks, not of the purpose of avoiding future sins itself, but of the actual purpose or intention of acting to destroy sin, which is not distinguished from the act of sorrow itself. For he defines contrition as sorrow for sins committed with a purpose of amendment, or with an intention of removing those sins insofar as they have the character of an offense, and their consequences, which are guilt and punishment (III, question 85, article 1, body and reply to objection 3; articles 2 and 3; article 4; question 86, article 2; *In IV Sent.*, distinction 14, question 1, article 3, question 4; these texts are cited here in various places, for example in the following article, pp. 365 ff.).

Sometimes he speaks only of the purpose of confessing and making satisfaction, as in the celebrated definition of the ancients: "Sorrow undertaken for sins, with the purpose of confessing and making satisfaction," which the Holy Doctor calls a definition "as regards the very substance of the act" (*Supplement*, question 1, article 1, cited above).

Sometimes he speaks of the very purpose of avoiding future sins, but at the same time shows its less essential or accidental character:

III, question 84, article 10, reply to objection 4: "To repent is to grieve over sins previously committed, and not to commit again what must be grieved over, whether simultaneously while that is being done, or in act, or in purpose. For he is a mocker, and not a penitent, who at the same time as he repents does what he repents of, or proposes to do again, or even actually sins afterward by the same or another kind of sin. But the fact that someone subsequently sins, whether in act or in purpose, does not exclude the truth of his former Penance; for the truth of a preceding act is never excluded by a subsequent contrary act. Just as one who truly ran may afterward sit, so one who truly repented may afterward sin."

III, question 87, article 1, reply to objection 1: "Penance for mortal sins requires that a man propose to abstain from each and every mortal sin."

Opusculum 5, cited by the Council of Florence in the Decree for the Armenians, as above.

Contra Gentiles, book IV, chapter 72: "In Penance it is required that the mind turn away from sin, grieving over what has been committed, and proposing not to commit it."

In IV Sent., distinction 14, question 1, article 1, question 6: "A man ought to display two things in his heart through Penance: first, sorrow of heart for the evils he has committed; second, the purpose of

not committing such things thereafter."

Supplement, question 2, article 4, cited above (p. 345): "The one who is contrite grieves over past sin and guards against future sin." It should be noted that in this article, where the relationship of contrition to future sins is explicitly and directly considered, the Holy Doctor expressly teaches that contrition according to its proper species regards the past alone and only consequently regards the future.

In IV Sent., distinction 14, question 1, article 1, question 6: "Hence the Master, reducing it [the definition of Ambrose and Gregory] to its proper form, proposes three things: namely the genus, when he says 'it is a virtue'; sorrow for past sins, when he says 'because we lament the evils committed'; and the purpose of future amendment, when he says 'with a purpose of amendment.' The others which are stated ... pertain to those things."

In IV Sent., distinction 14, question 1, article 1, question 6, reply to objection 4: "Although, insofar as it is Penance, it does not concern the future, nevertheless insofar as it is an amendment of an offense committed against God, it requires regard for the future, namely the purpose of taking care thereafter; and this purpose is understood in the statement 'not to commit again what must be grieved over,' that is, to have the purpose of not committing it. Or it is understood as pertaining to perfect Penance, so that what is added is not of the essence of Penance, but of its perfection, since without this it does not attain its ultimate fruit; or it may be referred to the same time, as the Master says."

Conclusion III

Besides contrition, or besides the three acts of hatred, sorrow, and purpose, there are other acts elicited by the very virtue of Penance, and not merely commanded by it; among these are numbered sacramental confession and satisfaction.

This is proved from the fact that any virtue can elicit all acts to which its proper formal character extends; but the character of satisfaction, which is proper to the virtue of Penance, is found not only in contrition, or hatred, sorrow, and purpose, but also, although secondarily, in other acts, and particularly and specifically in sacramental confession and satisfaction.

Among the acts which are in any way related to Penance, some regard it as their object, such as acts of love, complacency, and joy over Penance performed. These are elicited by other virtues, such as charity and religion (unless they are regarded as modalities of the act elicited by Penance itself, reflecting upon itself, as will presently be said). Others are related to Penance by way of causality. Of these, some command Penance and others are commanded by it (for an act of Penance can be commanded by an act of any virtue, especially charity; and Penance can in turn command the acts of any virtue); others, finally, are elicited by the virtue itself.

The virtue of Penance can elicit, under at least some aspect, any virtuous act, or all acts whereby the will tends toward the good and flees from evil (such as love, desire, joy, hatred, sorrow), provided that there is found in them some character of satisfaction, which is the proper object toward which Penance itself tends. Thus, in natural things, a bee collecting honey acts directly upon every flower in which some honey can be found.

Among these acts, *first* is contrition itself, or rather the three acts of sorrow, hatred, and purpose, among which, as was said above, sorrow is first and principal. *Second* are sacramental confession and satisfaction, which will be shown in their proper place to be acts elicited by Penance itself (Articles 35 and 47). *Third* are certain implicit or reflected acts, which have as their object the very determinate and direct acts of confession, satisfaction, and especially contrition: namely acts of love, complacency, joy, and so forth. These are elicited by Penance rather than distinct from the aforesaid direct acts. For nothing is more reflective than an act of the will, which by the very fact that it wills, wills itself to will; and by the very fact that it grieves, wills itself to grieve and loves and rejoices that it grieves. *Fourth* are certain more abstract acts, hardly distinguished from the sorrow of contrition itself, but rather different aspects and considerations of it, such as the will to compensate, make satisfaction, repair, or restore the divine right injured through sin.

Suárez aptly observes:

"Concerning ... the acts [of the virtue of Penance in common] ... theologians write little, and almost only about contrition and attrition in particular. Nevertheless it seems necessary to know the thing itself, both in order better to understand the particular accounts of those acts and to comprehend the nature of this virtue. ... First, it must be said that Penance can elicit all the acts whereby the will tends toward good. ... For, in the first place, Penance can elicit a simple willing or sorrow concerning the goodness of justice toward God; then a desire to perform such justice, to which belongs the purpose of observing the commandments; furthermore, joy in such justice, or in the observance of the commandments, or even in satisfaction offered for sins, according to that saying of Augustine, *On True and False Penance*, chapter 13: 'Let the penitent grieve for sin, and rejoice over sorrow.' Likewise here belongs the intention of destroying sin, as St. Thomas teaches here, article 2, reply to objection 1, and article 4; and the will not to sin again, and to make satisfaction for sin committed, and to use means adapted to this end. ... Secondly, I say that the virtue of Penance flees from evil, or sin, in all the ways in which the will is accustomed to flee from evil; and so several other acts of this virtue are distinguished. ... The terms by which these acts are commonly designated must be noticed: hatred, detestation, displeasure, sorrow, and sadness."[187]

[187] Suárez, *De Poenitentia*, disputation 3, section 1, no. 2, and section 2, nos. 2 and 6, *Opera omnia*, vol. 22 (Paris, 1866), pp. 40–42.

Article 14. Whether the formal object of Penance is satisfaction consisting in sorrowful amendment, while its material object is every and only personally committed sin

ARTICLE XIV

Whether the Formal Object of Penance Is Satisfaction Consisting in Sorrowful Amendment, and Its Material Object Every and Only Personally Committed Sin

(III, question 85, articles 1, 2, 3; compare *In IV Sent.*, distinction 14, question 1, article 1; distinction 17, question 2, article 2.)

STATE OF THE QUESTION

From the consideration of the act we descend logically to the determination of the proper object of Penance, by which either the act or the habit is specified, so that from it, at the close of the article, a proper definition of this virtue may be gathered. Moreover, this article also summarizes the two preceding articles, whose conclusions could only have been deduced from the nature of the object of this virtue itself, although that object was not so precisely determined.

The question is more directly disputed among those who admit Penance to be a special and distinct virtue; for others consequently suppress its object or reduce it to the formal object of charity, religion, justice, and so forth.

To the question concerning the *formal object* is added the question concerning the *material object*. This must not be confused with the discussion already given concerning the remote matter of this sacrament (Articles VI–IX), although the two questions have certain elements in common, as will appear in Conclusion II.

NEGATIVE AND AFFIRMATIVE PARTS

CONCERNING THE QUESTION OF THE FORMAL OBJECT

The *first opinion*, that of Durandus, Suárez, Coninck, and Théophile Reynaud, teaches that the formal object of Penance is to preserve divine right uninjured (and accordingly that its total object is sin insofar as divine right is to be preserved from injury). They therefore infer that the specific act of Penance tends toward preserving divine right uninjured, and that Penance is identical with the virtue of justice, in the manner explained in Article XII.

Certain modern authors appear to agree with these theologians, among them de San (*De poenitentia*, chapter 3, nos. 38 and 55; chapter 6, no. 91) and Galtier, who, although elsewhere he teaches with us that Penance is a potential part of justice, writes: "Suárez ...; Lugo ...; Coninck ...; de San ... say that its primary motive is the right of God to be preserved, and consequently the same right, if it has been injured, to be repaired, although only secondarily. This way of understanding the matter appears more philosophical. For the case is so in the other virtues. Moreover, in this way it is more clearly evident that Penance is a virtue simply speaking, and not merely in a certain respect or on the supposition that sin has occurred. Others, however, say that the primary motive of Penance is the reparation of an injured right. And this opinion corresponds more closely to the usual sense of the word. But it does not follow that the intimate nature of the virtue is indicated by that sense of the word. Therefore, at least probably, one and the same virtue regards divine right as something to be pursued by the subject himself, and, when it has been injured by that subject, tends toward restoring it through that same subject."[188]

[188] Galtier, *De Poenitentia*, thesis 2, no. 30 (Paris, 1931), p. 22.

The *second opinion*, that of Vázquez and others, teaches that the formal object of Penance is the good of compensation for sin (and accordingly its object is sin as something to be compensated for), where compensation is understood absolutely and simply—that is, abstracting from its being made through sorrow itself, indeed excluding this from the formal notion of the object. Hence they infer that the specific act of Penance is the mere will to compensate, whereas contrition is not the primary act of Penance, nor even an act elicited by it, as we explained in Article XIII.

The *third and peculiar opinion*, that of Lugo, teaches that the formal object of Penance is in no way the notion of compensation, precisely because this notion is distinct from sorrow and detestation, insofar as it includes some love of sin;[189] rather, the formal object is the goodness of peace with God (and accordingly sin as an obstacle to peace that must be removed), that is, the goodness of repairing an offense, not an injury (for, he says, not every sin bears the character of an injury, nor would such a character, even if present, establish a strict obligation of reparation), but simply an offense, or something disturbing peace between God and man. From this Lugo infers that the primary act of Penance is contrition insofar as it restores peace with God, and that Penance is not in any manner reducible to justice, but is a certain special virtue that can be called *reconciliative*, and that obtains even in natural relations among men.

[189] Compare above, Article XII, reply to objection 6, pp. 312 ff.

Lugo himself writes: "I think ... there is a certain special virtue, different from all the others, whose formal object is moral equality with God; I do not mean equality brought about through justice strictly so called, but another moral equality, which consists in this: not having God reasonably turned away and indignant, or not giving God a ground for reasonably turning away from man. This, expressed simply and commonly, is called offending God. This virtue strives to avoid that offense against God and to preserve that moral equality; and if an offense has occurred, the same virtue strives to remove it and to restore the former equality and peace with God. "This virtue differs greatly from the virtue of justice even among men; for to offend someone is one thing, and to inflict an injury is another. An injury is against a strict and proper right possessed by another; but an offense often occurs without an injury. For example, if a friend reasonably becomes indignant with me because I refused a book which he asked to borrow, although I could have lent it without inconvenience, I certainly offend my friend, and give him sufficient ground for reasonably turning away from me, although in reality I inflict upon him no injury contrary to justice. ... Justice, therefore, obliges one to remove or avoid an injury; but another virtue, even among men, inclines one to remove or avoid an offense, forbidding one to give another sufficient and reasonable ground for indignation and aversion even without an injury, and inclining one to remove such an offense once it has occurred, by offering sufficient satisfaction through acts of respect, the asking of pardon, and other similar things, according to the degree of the offense; for when such satisfaction has been given, the offense is extinguished. "That this virtue exists among men is certain from experience and natural reason; for it is honorable and praiseworthy to have offended no one, nor to have reasonably turned anyone away from oneself, which we commonly call having peace with everyone. Hence that virtue, although less properly, might be called *peace*—I say, less properly, because it is not that peace of which St. Thomas treats in II–II, question 29, which is the effect of charity, but a certain peace that removes the reasonable complaints and offenses of others. "On this supposition we say that there is another similar virtue of man toward God, which inclines him to have peace with God, or to avoid offense against God, and to remove it in every way when it has occurred. Its formal object is the goodness of peace with God, or of not having God turned away and indignant. Since, however, God is offended by every sin, this virtue hates all sins under the formal aspect of offense against God, and strives to remove them all, so that it may again have God appeased and placated. It is therefore called a *reconciliative virtue*, because it tends toward this: to reconcile God, who has turned away from us."[190]

[190] Lugo, *Disputationes scholasticae*, vol. 4, *De Poenitentia*, disputation 2, section 4, nos. 49–51 (Paris, 1892), pp. 390 ff.

The *fourth opinion*, that of St. Thomas and the Thomists,[191] teaches that the formal object of Penance is the notion of amendment, or rather of satisfaction (and accordingly sin insofar as it can be amended or expiated by the penitent's own act, which is sorrow itself). It follows that the specific act of Penance is sorrow, in which the notion of amendment, compensation, and satisfaction is especially found, and that Penance is a potential part of justice, because it makes satisfaction or compensation, but according to an inequality.

[191] Compare John of St. Thomas, disputation 34, article 1, nos. 10, 14, 15, 21, 23, 24; the Salmanticenses, disputation 5 throughout, especially doubt 2, nos. 34, 36, 38, 39–49, and doubt 4, no. 157 ff.; Gonet, disputation 2, article 2; Billuart, dissertation 2, article 1.

CONCERNING THE QUESTION OF THE MATERIAL OBJECT

All theologians agree in teaching that actual mortal sins not yet remitted constitute the material object—and at least the principal material object—of the virtue of Penance.

The opinion of the Thomists, and, it appears, the more common opinion also among other theologians, is that the material object of Penance is every and only personally committed sin: accordingly, actual mortal sin; habitual mortal sin; venial sin; sin already remitted, whether mortal or venial; even punishment insofar as it is a consequence of sin. But it does not include imperfections properly so called, material sin, original sin, or another person's sin.

Certain individual opinions depart from this position in one or another of the foregoing objects; among these, the most notable is the opinion which teaches that the sins of others are an object of Penance.

First, Lugo (*Disputation* 3, section 1, no. 13) seems to teach that habitual sin as such, that is, insofar as it is distinguished from actual sin, is not an object of Penance. For he says that habitual sin as such is merely the lack of divine pardon, which cannot be retracted by a man, since it is not an action of man but of God. We say "seems to teach," because Lugo's explanation is rather confused, and can be interpreted, in light of what will presently be added, as saying that habitual sin (and likewise original sin) is indeed an object of the virtue of Penance, insofar as there can be sorrow and satisfaction for it, but not an object of the act of retraction.

Lugo himself writes, immediately after the words quoted in Article VIII (p. 234): "But as regards the first part of habitual sin, I do not sufficiently understand how it can be the object of retraction. I am speaking of habitual sin insofar as it is distinguished from actual sin. For I suppose that habitual sin is nothing other than a past actual sin insofar as it morally perseveres; and it is judged to persevere so long as it is not pardoned by God or removed through satisfaction. ... Thus habitual sin adds to a past actual sin that lack of divine pardon. ... If, therefore, we are speaking of what habitual sin adds to actual sin, I do not see how it can be an object of retraction: for that is the mere negation of God's pardon, which, as I said, I cannot retract, since it is not my action but God's. I can indeed grieve over habitual sin as habitual, insofar as it formally removes divine peace; I can intend its removal, and make satisfaction for it. The same thing must also be said of original sin in the same way. Nevertheless I cannot retract it insofar as it is habitual; just as I cannot properly retract the debt of punishment arising from sin, although I can retract the actual fault from which that debt arose. In the same way I can retract the actual sin from which habitual stain arises; but I cannot retract the habituality itself (so to speak) arising from it."[192]

[192] Lugo, *Disputationes scholasticae*, vol. 4, *De Poenitentia*, disputation 3, section 1, no. 13 (Paris, 1892), p. 399.

Certain authors, whom Lugo mentions without naming them (*Disputation* 3, section 1, no. 8), teach as probable that venial sins are not a material object of Penance, because a man can offer equal compensation for venial sins, whereas the nature of Penance is to offer only unequal satisfaction.

Certain authors, such as Suárez (*Disputation* 2, section 1, nos. 15 ff.) and Lugo (*Disputation* 3, section 2, no. 45), teach that punishment is an object of Penance only under the aspect of a means for appeasing God, but not under the aspect of an object to be detested and compensated for, as sin is.

Lugo himself writes: "We can ... consider punishment in two ways. First, insofar as the virtue of Penance embraces it as a means of appeasing God, who is angry because of fault; and in this way punishment is a material object of Penance, not indeed an object of flight, but of pursuit. Secondly, we can consider it in relation to flight, insofar as that liability introduces some stain, or something like a stain, into the soul, and is the effect of past sin. In this way we ask whether Penance hates that liability as it hates sin. Some affirm this, because the penitent, intending the destruction of sin, also intends to make satisfaction for the punishment due to sin. But I very much doubt that Suárez speaks more truly in the place cited above, no. 14, when he says that Penance does not flee but rather embraces the evil of punishment. For Penance flees only that evil which is opposed to the appeasing of God and to peace with him, toward which it tends; but to this only the evil of fault is opposed, which is an offense against God—not the liability to punishment. For once fault has been removed, God in no way remains offended or turned away, and nevertheless the liability to punishment remains. A man can therefore flee it from another motive, insofar as it is opposed, for example, to the vision of God, which it delays, or insofar as it brings some evil upon the man himself; but not insofar as it is opposed to peace with God, toward which Penance tends, since the liability is in no way an offense against God."[193]

[193] Lugo, *Disputationes scholasticae*, vol. 4, *De Poenitentia*, disputation 3, section 2, no. 45 (Paris, 1892), p. 410.

Lugo (*Disputation* 3, section 1, nos. 9–11) teaches that imperfections properly so called (which are in no way sins, not even venial sins) are an object of Penance, insofar as some genuine act of hatred can be exercised concerning them under the aspect of an indirect and remote disposition toward sin itself.

Lugo himself writes: "Penance seems able to exercise some act of hatred concerning these imperfections, as concerning things at least mediately opposed to the peace of God which it intends to preserve. For although God is not positively turned away from a man on account of them, so to speak, he is nevertheless turned away negatively, that is, he is less closely united to him; and although he is not positively provoked to punish, he is nevertheless deprived of the giving of efficacious and more abundant helps. This negation, although it is not positive and, strictly speaking, is not punishment, is nevertheless indirectly on account of imperfection, as though through something that removes what would otherwise prevent that result; and so such an imperfection seems indirectly to dispose toward fault, which follows from the negation of efficacious help. For this reason it can be hated by Penance as a remote disposition indirectly inducing fault and offense against God; and under the same aspect the virtue of Penance can avoid imperfections and carefully guard against them."[194]

[194] Lugo, work cited, section 1, no. 10, p. 398.

Lugo (*Disputation* 3, section 1, nos. 16 ff.) teaches that material sin is an object of Penance, not immediately but, as it were, mediately, insofar as its repetition remotely disposes toward formal sin; hence, under that aspect it can be detested by Penance.

He himself writes: "I have said ... that that material act of perjury, for example, committed without fault, does not immediately belong to the object of Penance. Yet I do not deny that it can belong to it, as it were, mediately. For such acts, even when done without advertence, engender a habit and dispose a man to commit similar acts afterward more easily, even with some advertence, by which God is offended. Therefore, under this aspect they can be hated by Penance—not indeed because they offend God, but because they dispose, at least remotely, toward an offense against God."[195]

[195] Lugo, work cited, no. 20, p. 401.

Suárez (*Disputation* 2, section 1, no. 14) teaches that original sin is an object capable of being detested by an act of the virtue of Penance. For justice toward God can hate the state of injustice in which the human race is found, especially insofar as the will of Adam, who sinned, is in some manner reckoned our own. Lugo likewise (*Disputation* 3, section 1, nos. 12 ff.) does not consider it contrary to doctrine to say that original sin is an object of Penance, but only as regards an act of detestation and not an act of retraction; that is, "the virtue of Penance can detest original fault as something opposed to peace with God" (compare the passages cited above on pp. 234 and 361).

Certain authors, such as Suárez (*Disputation* 2, section 1, nos. 10 ff.), Coninck (*Disputation* 1, doubt 3), Lugo (*Disputation* 3, section 2), and among modern authors Galtier (*De Poenitentia*, thesis 2, no. 30, C; defending this opinion as probable), teach that even the sins of others are an object of Penance, although not a primary one. They argue that both in one's own sins and in those of others the same formal object of Penance is found, namely an injury to divine right (Suárez) or a disturbance of peace with God (Lugo), so that the same habit of virtue gives rise to hatred of one's own sin and hatred of another's sin.

Yet, recognizing the novelty of their opinion, the aforesaid doctors introduce some artificial qualification. Suárez, indeed, using a straightforward distinction, says that the same habit elicits an act of detestation both of one's own sins and of others' sins; nevertheless, under the denomination of Penance properly so called, inasmuch as it involves the twofold notion of retraction and justice toward God, it properly reaches and regards only one's own sins. Lugo, on the other hand, offers a twofold distinction. One is between acts: he teaches that Penance elicits toward the sins of others only an act of hatred, not of retraction. The other is more artificial, among the several habits, by which, in accordance with the varying philosophical and theological principles peculiar to him, he introduces two habits of Penance, one acquired and the other infused. Regarding the acquired habit he teaches that one's own sins and the sins of others can be detested either by two distinct habits, or by two parts of the same habit, or, as it were, by partial habits, or partially by the same habit according to different terminations. Regarding the infused habit, he says that, although he cannot assert anything certain because a twofold habit of Penance may well be admitted, one concerning one's own sins and the other those of others, nevertheless it is probable that one and the same habit extends to both objects.

Suárez writes on the matter: "The goodness of each virtue, considered objectively, is lovable by that same virtue, whether considered simply or in one's own subject or in another. Thus charity loves the

goodness and dignity of divine love wherever they are proposed to it. Therefore, for the same reason, each virtue detests an evil contrary to its own goodness, wherever that evil is proposed; for ... it belongs to the same virtue to hate evil and to love good. Accordingly, by a proportionate argument, Penance hates the wickedness of sin wherever it is proposed—not, indeed, in the manner of retraction, for that affection includes a relation to one's own act committed, but in the manner of simple hatred and abhorrence."[196]

[196] Suárez, *De Poenitentia*, disputation 2, section 1, no. 11, *Opera omnia*, vol. 22 (Paris, 1866), p. 30.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion I. The formal and specifying object of Penance is the notion of satisfaction, or compensation for an offense, contained in sorrowful amendment; it is not the general preservation of violated divine right, nor the good of compensation taken simply, nor the good of peace with God.

This is proved in its several parts.

PART I. THE FORMAL OBJECT OF PENANCE IS THE NOTION OF SATISFACTION OR COMPENSATION CONTAINED IN SORROWFUL AMENDMENT

On account of sin, insofar as it is an injury to the right of God as Lord and Lawgiver, consisting in the turning of the will away from God and its adherence to a creature, satisfaction is owed to God—that is, an effective compensation for the offense. Such satisfaction can consist only in amendment itself, or in a change of will effected through sorrow: by this sorrow the will's adhesion to sin is, as it were, broken, and a contrite and sorrowful heart is offered to God. But satisfaction of this kind, on the one hand, belongs to the virtue of Penance and, on the other, is an object possessing a special moral goodness, capable of specifying this virtue directly and of itself. No other notion, whether proposed or conceivable by its opponents, can do this. Consequently, satisfaction itself is the formal and specifying object of Penance.

Furthermore, according to the traditional understanding, the virtue of Penance formally and principally tends toward the offense against God, in order directly to destroy, repair, and compensate for it. But only through satisfaction contained in sorrowful amendment is the direct destruction, reparation, and compensation of an offense against God formally and principally accomplished, as is evident from what has been said. Therefore the virtue of Penance formally tends toward the aforesaid satisfaction.

Furthermore, Penance is formally a certain justice toward God, although an imperfect justice; and it belongs to the nature of justice to render to each what is his own. Yet it is only through satisfaction contained in sorrowful amendment—that is, through a certain interior breaking of the adherence to sin which consists in sorrow—that the sinner restores to God what belongs to Him: namely, the non-adherence to sin that coincides with adherence to God. Therefore the aforesaid satisfaction belongs to the formal notion of Penance, and is accordingly its formal object.

Furthermore, the same conclusion is gathered from the significant and constant DOCTRINE OF ST. THOMAS, particularly in those passages where he directly considers the formal character of Penance as a special virtue distinct from others, and its primary object:

Article 1: "Penance is sorrow for past sins with the intention of removing them."

Article 1, reply to objection 3: "The sorrow [of the penitent] ... is displeasure or reprobation of a past deed with the intention of removing its consequence, namely, the offense against God and the debt of punishment."

Article 2: "Where a special praiseworthy act occurs, there it is necessary to posit a special habit of virtue. But it is manifest that in Penance there is found a special character of a praiseworthy act: namely, to work toward the destruction of a past sin insofar as it is an offense against God, which does not belong to the character of any other virtue." Article 2, reply to objection 2: "Penance ... regards all sins, but nevertheless under a special aspect, namely, insofar as they are capable of being amended by an act of man."

Article 2, reply to objection 3: "Penance expels every sin effectively, insofar as it operates toward the destruction of sin."

Article 3: "Penance does not possess the character of a special virtue merely from the fact that a man sorrows over an evil committed, for charity would suffice for that; but from the fact that the penitent grieves over a sin committed insofar as it is an offense against God, with the purpose of amendment."

Article 3, reply to objection 3: "[A man] voluntarily compensates by making amends, and this belongs to Penance."

Article 4: "The proper ... act [of Penance] is the purpose of amending what has been committed against God."

In his Commentary on the Fourth Book of the Sentences, distinction 14, question 1, article 1, question 3, St. Thomas says:

"There is something else belonging to the nature of Penance ... which does not belong to the nature of virtue in general: namely, to make satisfaction for a sin committed."

In the same place he adds:

"Penance receives a special aspect of its object from this: that it regards a sin committed by oneself as capable of being expiated through the act of the penitent."

In the same distinction, question 1, article 1, question 3, reply to objection 3, he writes:

"Although it belongs to every virtue to detest evils committed, considered without qualification, nevertheless to detest them for the purpose of expiation belongs to a special virtue [namely, Penance]."

In question 4 of the same article:

"The object [of Penance] ... is the sin committed, which it intends to expiate."

In the reply to objection 1:

"Its [that is, Penance's] ordering toward its object is touched upon in the words 'to bewail the sins committed.'"

In the reply to objection 2:

"[Penance] is moved to destroy sins already committed ...; its act [is] ... to expel sin."

In question 6 of the same article:

"Penance consists in the amendment of an offense voluntarily undertaken."

In the same place:

"For God, who looks upon the heart, it is fitting that compensation should begin in the affection of the heart ... [and therefore] what a man exhibits in his heart through Penance is ... sorrow of heart for the evils he has done."

In the reply to objection 4 of that question:

"[Penance] is the amendment of an offense committed against God."

In the reply to objection 6 St. Thomas says that the definition of the Master of the Sentences is "most complete," because it touches on what is required "for making amendment to God"; and that the definition of Pseudo-Augustine places "differences even nearer to the proper species," insofar as it adds the notion of punishment to sorrow.

In the same distinction, question 1, article 3, question 4:

"To detest an evil committed with the purpose of amendment and the intention of expiating, or of appeasing God for the offense committed, is an act of [Penance]."

From these passages it is apparent that St. Thomas presents the formal object of Penance under three following, mutually equivalent aspects: first, to grieve over sin formally as an offense against God—and hence as something to be expiated and amended, since an offense as such demands expiation; the act of grieving is also expressed by the words displeasure, reprobation, detestation, and weeping. Second, to amend by a human act, to work toward the destruction of sin, effectively to expel or destroy sin, to remove, expiate, punish, or compensate for it. Third, to make satisfaction, to expiate, to compensate, or to punish.

St. Thomas subordinates these three aspects to one another, either explicitly or equivalently, so that he speaks of sorrow that amends and compensates, of amendment through a human act or through sorrow, and of satisfaction (that is, expiation, compensation, or punishment) through a human act or through sorrow. But the very notion of satisfaction or compensation is presented as the more specific and formal one. In particular, in the penultimate passages just quoted, the Angelic Doctor states that the notion of punishment—or of satisfaction for guilt—expresses the difference nearest to the proper species of Penance.

From what has been said it follows that the formal object of Penance is satisfaction or compensation for an offense against God, contained within amendment effected in sorrow. This formal object is composed of three aspects subordinate to one another: sorrow, amendment, and satisfaction. Yet the last, satisfaction, is the most proper formalizing aspect, gathering the others together under the one formal object from which Penance takes its species. For Penance, being formally a kind of justice toward God, has for its object satisfaction or compensation for the offense against God. Such satisfaction consists in the amendment of the heart, and this amendment of the heart consists in sorrow itself.

Consequently, the formal object of Penance can be expressed indifferently, as various theologians do, as satisfaction, amendment, sorrow, or sin insofar as it is expiable, amendable, or to be bewailed.

Formally speaking, however, its object is, without separation or division, the satisfaction of sorrowful amendment; and, in the strictest sense, it is the very notion of satisfaction for an offense against God.

PART II. THE FORMAL OBJECT OF PENANCE IS NOT THE GENERAL PRESERVATION OF VIOLATED DIVINE RIGHT, NOR COMPENSATION TAKEN SIMPLY, NOR PEACE WITH GOD

The notion of preserving divine right from violation, taken generically and without distinction, does not constitute a special moral goodness, but belongs in different ways to all the virtues, as was stated in Article XII (reply to objection 20, p. 333 ff.). It also belongs to Penance to preserve divine right from violation, but under its own peculiar and specifically distinct aspect: to compensate for a right that has been violated, that is, to make satisfaction for sin through sorrowful amendment. The arguments brought forward by Galtier have been answered in the place cited.

The good of compensation taken simply, that is, considered apart from sorrowful amendment, cannot constitute the object of Penance, as has been shown in the preceding article (p. 341 ff.).

The good of peace with God cannot be the formal object of Penance, but only its extrinsic end. For, as Lugo himself admits in agreement with us against Vázquez, the primary and formal act of Penance is contrition, that is, sorrow and detestation. But the good of peace with God cannot be the formal object of contrition (which must likewise be the object of the virtue and of its primary act); for peace with God is not regarded with hatred but, on the contrary, is desired. Accordingly, only sin is detested by the penitent, and only over sin does he grieve.

Nor is it possible to say that contrition concerns sin precisely as an obstacle to peace with God. For the notion of an obstacle is negative, and cannot specify the positive act of contrition. One must therefore introduce some positive notion, which can be none other than that of sorrowful satisfaction and compensation, through which the obstacle to peace with God is removed and peace itself is obtained as an end and an effect.

Lugo imprudently invokes THE AUTHORITY OF ST. THOMAS in favor of his position, writing: "St. Thomas expressed this more clearly [that is, that the good of peace is the object of Penance] in Book IV, distinction 14, question 1, article 1, question 3, reply to the last objection, where he proves the same claim in these words: 'Just as it is the act of a certain virtue for a man to please someone whom he has offended by sinning, so too it is the act of a certain virtue for a man to please God, whom he has offended by sinning.' He could not have explained our conclusion more clearly: for this is our conclusion, and its proof, as we see it."[197]

[197] Lugo, Disputationes scholasticae, vol. 4, De Poenitentia, disputation 2, section 4, no. 51 (Paris, 1892), p. 391.

The reply is, first, that even if St. Thomas had not elsewhere explicitly stated his mind against Lugo's interpretation, the words quoted would show only that the good of peace—or rather, the appeasing of God—pertains in some manner to Penance, not that it is its very object. Indeed, the comparison offered with the appeasing of a man excludes the latter interpretation: such appeasing is not the object of justice, but its end and effect. For the satisfaction which a man renders for an offense committed against another, consisting in humiliation, a request for pardon, and other signs of displeasure, has for its immediate object the offense itself as something detestable and amendable through these acts, not the passive appeasement of the offended person, which exists only as their end and effect.

Secondly, immediately after the words alleged, St. Thomas returns three times to the interpretation proposed by Lugo and explicitly teaches that reconciliation with God is not the object, but the end, of Penance:

Commentary on the Fourth Book of the Sentences, distinction 14, question 1, article 1, question 4: "Its object [that is, of Penance] is the sin committed, which it intends to expiate; but its end is God, with whom it intends to be reconciled."

In the same place, reply to objection 1: "When it is said that Penance reconciles with God, this is not referred to the relation of Penance to its object, but rather to its end; its order to the object, however, is touched upon by the words 'to bewail the sins committed.'"

In the same place, reply to objection 2: "Penance ... although it does not have God for its object, nevertheless has God for its proximate end: for it is moved to destroy the sins committed so that it may be reconciled with God" (compare the entire passage in Article XII, Conclusion IV, p. 299 ff.).

OBJECTIONS AND REPLIES TO CONCLUSION I

OBJECTION 1. The notion of satisfaction, since it includes a love of sin itself, does not possess the perfect character of moral goodness and therefore cannot specify any virtue. Moreover—and this is Lugo's objection—even granting that satisfaction is an honorable object capable of specifying some particular virtue, it cannot be the object specifying Penance itself. For Penance is opposed to sin, since, according to the understanding of Tradition, it is wholly directed toward sorrowing over and detesting sin. But satisfaction or compensation is not opposed to sin; rather, it so involves sin in its formal notion that a love of making satisfaction includes a certain love—not absolute, but simple and conditioned—of sin itself, since, if there were no sin, satisfaction itself could not be posited.

REPLY. As we showed above in Article XII (reply to objection 6, p. 312 ff.), it is false that the will to make satisfaction includes a love of sin. Consequently, the foundation of this objection collapses under its twofold form. Far from being opposed to one another, the notion of satisfaction and the notion of sorrow for sin mutually include each other, as we said above: thus satisfaction not only does not involve love of sin, but is itself a detestation of sin.

OBJECTION 2. Satisfaction cannot be the object of Penance, but must be counted among its ultimate ends and effects. For satisfaction is founded upon, or consists in, sorrow itself, as has been stated; but sorrow is the very act of Penance. Therefore satisfaction cannot be its object, nor the foundation of its object, since the object is presupposed to the act.

REPLY. The object of Penance is not satisfaction considered as an act, but considered as a formal aspect; that is, it is the very character of expiability—or, if one may use the expression, of satisfiability. The same may be said of sorrow and amendment. For the adequate object of Penance is sin as expiable, amendable, and capable of being bewailed. Nor is there any obstacle in the fact that these three aspects or designations derive from the three corresponding acts of satisfaction, amendment, and sorrow. This is proper to all objects and terms in relation to acts and powers. Thus the most proper object of the intellect is the intelligible, which is named from intellection, and the object of the will is the volitional, which is named from volition. Yet beneath these aspects there lies some more proximate foundational character, as under intelligibility lies immateriality or truth, and

under desirability lies the character of what is suitable or good, and under expiability lies the character of an offense as such.

OBJECTION 3. The formal object of Penance cannot be satisfaction for sins. For Penance precedes the remission of sin, toward which it tends; but, before the remission of sin, or before the infusion of grace, nothing is satisfactory, since satisfaction is founded upon grace. Therefore Penance cannot have the character of satisfaction either in its act or in its object.

Nor can it be said, as some do, that contrition, which is the formal act of Penance, follows grace, from which it proceeds and so receives the power of making satisfaction. For, quite apart from the fact that it can scarcely be understood how contrition should follow grace when it is ordered toward the remission of sin, it would then follow that contrition was indeed satisfactory, but not satisfactory with respect to sin whose remission has already been supposed to have taken place.

Nor does it suffice to add that contrition at once precedes and follows grace in different kinds of causes. For the difficulty remains in its entirety, since either contrition is understood as prior to grace, and then it is in no way satisfactory, or it is understood as posterior, and then it is not satisfactory with respect to sin itself. Indeed, it is not evident how that very act of Penance can be the act which must precede the remission of sin.

REPLY. Certain Thomists, such as Cajetan (On Faith and Works, chapter 11) and Soto, yielding to this difficulty, concede that Penance and contrition do not have a satisfactory power with respect to sin itself, but only with respect to temporal punishment. This is manifestly opposed to the doctrine of St. Thomas expounded above.

Others say that Penance is satisfactory for sin in this sense: God infuses grace that remits sins in view of satisfaction to follow through an act of contrition proceeding from that very grace. But this solution, first, overturns the very nature of an act of Penance, since the latter is essentially ordered toward the destruction of sin itself and therefore cannot presuppose that its remission has already been accomplished. Secondly, according to this solution the effect—that is, contrition—would be the cause of its own cause, namely sin-remitting grace; and grace itself, which is the principle of merit, would fall under merit, or become the term of merit or satisfaction. These consequences conflict with sound philosophy and theology.

Others, such as Suárez and John of St. Thomas, deny the minor premise of the foregoing argument. They teach that the act of justifying contrition does not proceed from sanctifying grace but precedes it, and is elicited by the will under the assistance of actual grace. Nevertheless, they add that such contrition possesses sufficiently the character of true satisfaction, even though under that very character it is perfected by the sanctifying grace which supervenes, by which it is, as it were, informed and from which it is subsequently elicited. But this position seems harsh to Thomistic ears, especially as regards its first assertion, as will be shown more suitably below in Article 51 (Chapter VI, On Satisfaction).

A different and true solution, deduced from the principles of St. Thomas, is proposed by other Thomists, such as the Salmanticenses, who treat the matter at greater length and with a subtler pen.[198]

[198] Salmanticenses, De Poenitentia, disp. 5, dub. 4, § 6, nos. 157–173.

For this solution the following five points of St. Thomas's doctrine must first be laid down.

First, in the justification of a sinner two causes and two movements concur: God, who infuses grace, and free will, which accepts it (Summa Theologiae, I–II, q. 113, a. 3).

Secondly, the infusion of grace and the removal of sin, in which justification consists, are two changes really and essentially distinct (On Truth, q. 28, a. 6), since they have distinct terms from which and to which the movement proceeds: namely, from the non-possession to the possession of grace, and from the possession of sin to its absence.

Thirdly, the first change is formally due to the influx of God, or of grace, while the other is due to the influx of free will, which consists in the very act of retractation or contrition (I–II, q. 113, a. 6).

Fourthly, between these two changes there is an order of priority—not in time, but in nature—such that the infusion of grace precedes in the order of efficient and final causality, whereas the removal of sin precedes in the order of material causality, or on the side of the subject. For the remission of guilt, or justification, is not understood unless the obstacle to remission, namely sin, is understood as already removed; just as the expulsion of a shadow by sunlight is not understood unless the removal of the body casting the shadow is understood beforehand (I–II, q. 113, a. 8; On Truth, q. 28, a. 7).

Fifthly, "Yet this mutual dependence of causes does not prevent the absolute order of causes from being preserved: the end, which is first in intention, is last in execution; and then the efficient cause, from which movement begins first in execution, is followed by the form, and finally the movement comes to rest in the matter or subject that receives the form. Hence in justification, whose end is the remission of sin, the infusion of grace from God as efficient cause is prior; next comes the essential informing ... by grace, to which follows contrition on the part of the subject; and finally there follows the remission of guilt considered as an offense. For under the notion of a stain and of a privation, guilt is already supposed to have been removed in the first logical instant of the infusion, though not under the notion of a voluntary offense, in which way it implies a turning away from God and constitutes the offense against Him. The same thing is explained more clearly and succinctly by St. Thomas in I–II, q. 113, a. 6. Enumerating all the things required for the justification of a sinner, he says: 'Four things are enumerated that are required for the justification of the ungodly: namely, the infusion of grace, the movement of free will toward God through faith, the movement of free will against sin, and the remission of guilt.' Here the remission of guilt is assigned as posterior to the movement of free will. 'The reason for this,' he says, 'is that, as has been stated, justification is a movement whereby the soul ..."

"... is moved by God from the state of guilt to the state of justice. Now in every movement by which one thing is moved by another, three things are required: first, the motion of the mover; secondly, the movement of the thing moved; thirdly, the consummation of the movement, or arrival at the end. Therefore, on the part of the divine motion, the infusion of grace is taken first (behold the first absolute thing); but on the part of the movement of free will, two movements are taken: its departure from the term from which, and its approach to the term to which (in the act of contrition, which detests sin on account of God supremely loved, there is a departure from sin and an approach to God). The consummation, or arrival at the term of this movement, is conveyed by the remission of guilt; for justification is consummated in it, since, as was said, the end which is first in intention is

last in execution. Hence it is most clearly evident that the act of contrition so follows the infusion of grace that it precedes the remission of the offense, if not by priority of time, at least by priority of nature and causality; and therefore it holds a middle place between the one and the other, so that it is the effect of grace and subsequently posterior to it, while it is also a cause of remission and consequently prior to it."[199]

[199] Salmanticenses, De Poenitentia, disp. 5, dub. 4, § 6, no. 164, Cursus theologicus, vol. 19 (Paris, 1883), pp. 488 ff.

From these principles the solution of the difficulty flows clearly and immediately.

For the act of Penance, or contrition, mediates in the order of nature, not of time, between grace (and therefore the removal of sin as a stain) and the removal of sin as an offense. Accordingly, insofar as it follows grace and proceeds from it, it is satisfactory; but insofar as it precedes the removal of the offense, it is satisfactory for the offense, or directs its satisfactory influence toward the removal of the offense. In this way all that the Thomists teach is most excellently preserved and brought into harmony: namely, that the act of contrition tends toward a remission of sin which it precedes, and yet follows from that very grace or charity by which sin itself is removed; likewise, that contrition is satisfactory, or has a satisfactory influence upon the removal of sin, and yet receives this from that very grace by which sin is expelled. For sin is removed by grace insofar as it is a stain, and by contrition insofar as it is an offense; thus contrition precedes the removal of the offense and operates satisfactorily against it, although it follows the removal of the stain and the grace upon which it depends for its existence and operation.

YOU OBJECT that the foregoing distinction between the removal of sin as a stain and the removal of sin as an offense is inappropriate, since between the two removals there is room for contrition only by an imagined priority. For in the very same first logical instant in which God removes sin as a stain through the infusion of grace, the offense is also understood as extinguished: for God would not infuse grace if He still remained offended, since to be offended means nothing other than to exclude someone from His grace, as St. Thomas says (q. 86, a. 2).

REPLY. The offense against God, considered on God's side, involves two things: the very act of displeasure of the divine will, which may be called active offense, and the very character of a violation of divine right, which is not voluntary on God's part but on the creature's, and which may be called passive offense. Among human beings too, the injury inflicted upon someone is one thing, and the displeasure thereby caused in his will is another: a person can lay aside his displeasure without that very fact taking away the violation of his right committed by another.

Moreover, grace can be understood in three senses: first, actively and on God's side, as it signifies His gracious and benevolent will; secondly, on man's side, as it signifies the physical reality of a supernatural habit; thirdly, on man's side, as it signifies the moral effect of removing the character of offense and restoring the relation of friendship. In the first sense grace is opposed to active offense against God; in the second to the stain of sin; in the third to passive offense.

Consequently, if offense is taken actively, certainly it is most immediately remitted by the very fact that God infuses grace: for God would not infuse grace if He were still offended with the sinner. Hence in the same prior logical instant active offense is remitted through the opposed active grace, and the stain of sin is removed through the opposed physical reality of grace. It does not follow, however, that passive offense itself is removed in that same prior instant: for the latter is not directly

opposed to the physical reality of grace, nor is it destroyed by it, but must be destroyed in a logically posterior instant through the creature's retractation or through the opposite act of contrition. Indeed, the act of contrition flows from that same grace; but since the offense is voluntary on the creature's part, not on God's, it is understood to remain until it is retracted by the contrary act of contrition.

"For this reason, in that prior instant of the infusion of grace, the stain of sin and the divine displeasure considered as an act are understood to be excluded; but not the formal offense itself, which we can still suppose to persist on man's side, because the enmity of the person has been set aside while something still remains, according to justice, to be deplored or restored. And what really and on the side of the thing happens successively between human beings is understood to happen, and truly happens, instantaneously between God and the man being justified: for God turns Himself toward the creature through grace as a means, in which consists active forgiveness on God's side; and in the same instant the creature is turned toward God under this grace, in which consists its satisfaction. Thus justification is completed and perfected both on God's side and on the creature's, and all the elements are in harmony."[200]

[200] Salmanticenses, De Poenitentia, disp. 5, dub. 4, § 6, no. 172, Cursus theologicus, vol. 19 (Paris, 1883), p. 497.

YOU OBJECT AGAIN. The removal of sin as an offense is accomplished by grace taken in the third sense just mentioned. It follows that the act of contrition, which is an influence of that grace, stands between grace as removing the stain and the same grace as removing the offense, and accordingly the same grace is both prior and posterior to itself; and the influence of grace, or contrition, precedes and causes grace itself. In this there is a heap of subtle contradictions.

REPLY. No contradiction is found here, but only a mutual influence and a mutual priority of causes in different kinds of causality. Precisely to this may be reduced the whole character of justification, in which the infusion of grace causes the removal of sin and conversely, and thus each of these is prior and posterior to the other in different respects and in different kinds of cause. Since in justification there intervene two influences, namely that of God and that of free will, grace, insofar as it descends from God, causes grace insofar as it is accepted by free will, by causing that very acceptance or act of contrition. This act, in turn, as an act of satisfaction, brings about the removal of the offense as such, and not merely the removal of the stain, which it possesses directly from grace itself.

Philosophy and Theology supply examples of the same sort of priority and posteriority. Thus the form of man, or the human soul, although one, gives the body different grades of perfection (namely corporeal, vegetative, sensitive, and intellective being). From each of these degrees flow its proper accidents, so that these precede and dispose the subject toward the superior degree (as the accidents proper to a body are understood before the vegetative degree); and consequently the same form, according to its different degrees, is prior and posterior to itself in existence and influence (compare Summa Theologiae, I, q. 76, a. 6, corpus and reply to objection 1). Something still higher and more profound occurs in the mystery of the Trinity: there the very relation of paternity is prior and posterior to itself with respect to the act of generation, since under the conception of "in" (or, more formally, "toward, as that by which") it precedes generation as its principle and constitutes the Person of the Father; but under the conception of "toward" (or, more formally, "toward, as that which") it follows generation and flows from it as from its foundation.

CONCLUSION II

The material object of Penance is every and only personally committed sin; accordingly, both actual and habitual mortal sin, venial sin, sin already remitted, whether mortal or venial, and even punishment insofar as it is a consequence of sin are its objects. But imperfections properly so called, material sin, future sin, original sin, and the sins of another are not its objects.

The conclusion is proved in its several parts.

FIRST PART. Every and only personal sin is the material object of Penance.

For the primary act of Penance, which is contrition, or sorrow and detestation, can be exercised concerning every and only personal sin.

SECOND PART. Mortal sin, both actual and habitual, is an object of Penance, and indeed its primary object.

As regards actual mortal sin, it is plain that it is an object, and indeed the primary object, of Penance, since in it, as in a perfect aversion from God, there consists an offense against God simply so called, which requires sorrowful conversion and satisfaction.

The same, moreover, holds for habitual sin, in which actual sin itself remains, as it were, in its effect. In habitual sin, therefore, the cause is hated in its effect; and because sorrow or detestation of sin involves the retraction of sin, habitual sin too may thereby be said to be retracted, since the retraction of actual sin extends as far as the sin itself, and consequently even to its effects. Hence Lugo vainly grants sorrow and denies retraction with respect to habitual sin; nor does St. Thomas make any such distinction between the acts of the penitent, but simply asserts that Penance consists in the "intention of removing the consequence [of sin] . . . , namely, the offense against God and the liability to punishment" (a. 1, reply to objection 3; cf. Commentary on the Sentences, IV, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, qu. 6, reply to objection 3). What Lugo adds, namely that habitual sin, as such and insofar as it is distinguished from actual sin, involves merely the absence of divine pardon, is not true. For it essentially involves the character of a stain and the effect of actual sin, and thus cannot be abstracted from its relation to actual sin.

THIRD PART. Venial sin is an object of Penance, although a secondary one.

For, as was stated in Article VII (where the matter of Penance as a sacrament was discussed), venial sin possesses the true character of sin and of an offense against God, although not in an unqualified way; accordingly, it calls for reparation and satisfaction, which constitute the proper object of Penance. Furthermore, venial sin inclines and disposes toward mortal sin; hence the very act of detesting mortal sins extends in a certain manner also to venial sins. Moreover, other virtues likewise shun their contraries even in slight matter: thus temperance avoids even a slightly gluttonous act, and justice abstains even from slight theft and from lesser offenses and violations of another's right. Therefore, by parity of reasoning, Penance detests an offense against God even in slight matter.

Nor does the plausible objection advanced by some—that Penance involves unequal satisfaction, whereas in the case of venial sins there can be equal satisfaction—present any difficulty. For, as was said in Article XII (reply to the objections following objection 19, pp. 332–333), it is not necessary that the secondary act of a virtue immediately regard the very formal object of that virtue as its principal act does. It is enough that it regard that object mediately, as a root and cause moving one toward the attainment of its proper and immediate object. Thus, through an intention of making satisfaction for an offense against God simply so called, an offense that requires satisfaction which is

necessarily unequal, the penitent is moved to make satisfaction for an offense against God in a certain respect, for which satisfaction is necessarily equal. Nor does this character of equality contradict the character of inequality found in the principal act, since such inequality is a specific element of Penance, not in an exclusive sense but only in an affirmative one. Penance does not tend toward satisfaction precisely because it is unequal; rather, the satisfaction is unequal, at least when Penance is considered as justice toward God, because it belongs to the innermost character of Penance to tend toward satisfaction as far as it can, and therefore according to a relative equality in the case of venial sins, even though it can satisfy for mortal sins only unequally (cf. above, Article XII, pp. 332–333).

FOURTH PART. Sin already remitted, whether mortal or venial, is an object of Penance.

For, as was said in Article VII, Conclusion III (where the matter of the sacrament of Penance was discussed), sin, however much it has been remitted, remains in its objective being or in what has previously been done, and also in a certain manner subjectively in its causes and effects. Accordingly, it can come under the principal act of Penance, that is, it can be abhorred and repaired (cf. what was said in Article XI, reply to objection 1, pp. 271–276).

FIFTH PART. Even punishment due for sin is an object of Penance.

For punishment is an effect of sin; hence sin itself, as a cause in its effect, may be abhorred in punishment, and the intention of destroying punishment through satisfaction is an intention of destroying sin in its effects.

Therefore Lugo's and Suárez's distinction is vain, when they concede that punishment is reached by Penance as a means of appeasement and as an object to be pursued, but not as an object of sorrow and detestation. For from the very fact of detestation it follows that the penitent embraces punishment, not indeed as a beloved object, but as an object to be taken away—or rather embraces satisfaction, by which punishment itself, or the liability to punishment, or the obligation to pay the punishment, is removed. Hence St. Thomas, without any such distinction, says that the act of Penance is "sorrow . . . over what has been done in the past, together with the intention of removing its consequence, namely, the offense against God and the liability to punishment" (a. 1, reply to objection 3), and that it is "to detest something on account of its defilement, both as guilt and insofar as it is connected with liability to punishment" (Commentary on the Sentences, IV, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, qu. 3; cf. q. 1, a. 1, qu. 6, reply to objection 3; dist. 17, q. 2, a. 2, qu. 1).

SIXTH PART. Imperfections properly so called are in no way an object of Penance.

Imperfection can be understood in three ways. First, merely negatively, as the absence of a perfection that could be present in a subject; thus every human act, however good, is imperfect. Secondly, privatively, as the absence of a perfection due by reason of necessity; in moral matters such a privation consists in sin, at least venial sin. Thirdly, again privatively, but as the absence of a perfection due solely on grounds of fittingness; this is an imperfection properly so called, with which the present question is concerned. For it is agreed that an imperfection understood in the second way is in no way an object of Penance, whereas one understood in the first way constitutes its proper object.

An imperfection properly so called, therefore, is in no way an object of Penance, because it in no way possesses the character of sin, as is evident from its distinction from venial sin itself. Indeed,

considered in itself, it is a good and meritorious act, since in a voluntary act no middle term is granted between good and evil. If it is not a sin, therefore, it possesses no character of an offense and cannot be the proper object of divine displeasure or of human sorrow.

Lugo's distinction is vain when he says that imperfections, although not evil, indirectly and remotely dispose one toward sin itself, and consequently are an object of Penance. This is denied, for an imperfection, given the nature of the act itself, is a good and meritorious act; hence it disposes not toward sin but toward grace, although not toward more abundant aids of grace, and it leads not away from God but toward Him, albeit at a slower pace. For being less disposed is not the same as being indisposed, nor is turning toward God less perfectly the same as turning away from Him. Nor is it relevant that spiritual masters abhor imperfections and insist especially upon detesting them, since such detestation belongs not to the virtue of Penance but to the zeal of charity, by which "we strive eagerly for the better gifts" and follow "a more excellent way" of love (1 Cor. 12:31; cf. 13:1 ff.).

SEVENTH PART. Material sin is not an object of Penance.

For material sin altogether lacks the proper character of sin, that is, the character of voluntariness; hence it is not an offense against God requiring reparation and compensation through a sorrowful conversion of the will. On this point St. Thomas says: "Contrition is not over sin merely by reason of the substance of the act, because from this it does not have the character of evil"; "Contrition is opposed to sin in that respect in which it proceeds from the choice of the will . . . but not in respect of that which is material in sin" (Commentary on the Sentences, IV, dist. 17, q. 2, a. 2, qu. 2, reply to objection 1; qu. 3, reply to objection 1).

Nor does it avail to appeal to parity with other virtues, which detest their contrary even when it is involuntary—as justice avoids harm done to a neighbor, even if involuntary. For here there is no parity, since Penance cannot abstract from the character of voluntariness, in which its proper object, namely sin, consists.

Nor does it help to invent, with Lugo, an indirect relation of material sin to this virtue, founded upon the consideration that the repetition of such a sin might generate a habit and thus remotely dispose someone toward formal sin. For the habit just mentioned, whatever it may be, is by no means generated in the will itself, which is the sole cause and subject of formal sin. Moreover, if material sin were in any way an object of Penance, the same would have to be said of all natural inclinations and passions, which can become remote occasions of sin, while they are rather the matter of virtue and merit. The detestation of material sin, therefore, pertains not to Penance but to other virtues in their proper respective matters.

EIGHTH PART. Original sin is not an object of Penance.

For original sin is not a sin committed by the subject, nor does it consist in an aversion of the will from God calling for compensation through sorrowful conversion. Nor, therefore, can anyone repent of it, although he may tend toward its removal through an act of detestation elicited by other virtues, as was said in Article VIII, Conclusion I (pp. 233–234). Lugo's scruple mentioned above, which assigns such detestation to the virtue of Penance, is therefore left without foundation.

NINTH PART. Future sin is not properly an object of Penance.

For future sin is not a sin already committed, nor does it involve an aversion and hardening of the will that needs to be removed and crushed. Nevertheless, a secondary act of Penance is concerned with future time rather than with future sins, or with sins that may possibly occur in the future: namely, the purpose of not sinning thereafter (cf. the preceding article, Conclusion II, p. 345).

TENTH PART. The sin of another is not an object of Penance.

The contrary position has no foundation in Tradition; indeed, it is entirely unheard of and alien to the mind of the Fathers and ancient Doctors. All their definitions, both of contrition (cf. the text of St. Thomas at the end of the preceding article, pp. 351 ff.) and of Penance (cf. at the end of the present article, pp. 382 ff.), which Lugo himself adduces and approves (disp. 2, sect. 2), refer only to the penitent's own sins.

Moreover, neither the secondary act of Penance, that is, the purpose of avoiding sin insofar as it concerns the past, nor its principal act, that is, contrition, can be exercised concerning the sins of another. For contrition consists in sorrow, displeasure, and detestation—not of just any sort, but of a kind involving conversion of the will and the breaking of its hardness. Yet it is plain that sorrow, displeasure, and detestation conceived over another's sins can in no way convert or break that other person's will. Hence such sorrow and detestation pertain not to Penance but to other virtues, chiefly charity and religion. Hence St. Thomas says: "No one repents except of what he himself has done . . . [and] no one is contrite for the sins of others"; "That very thing is crushed which was formerly hard and whole; whence it is clear that contrition for sin belongs to the one in whom the hardness of sin previously existed; and thus there is no contrition for another's sins" (Commentary on the Sentences, IV, dist. 17, q. 2, a. 2, qu. 5, objection to the contrary and reply).

Again, the end of Penance—or rather, according to Lugo, its very object—is the reconciliation of the sinner with God. But the sorrow and detestation of another's sins cannot obtain that reconciliation for the sinner.

Again, no Penance is granted for original sin, which contains the least degree of voluntariness; much less, therefore, is Penance granted for the sins of another, which are in no way voluntary in the subject concerned.

Moreover, the arguments by which the opponents seek to support their assertion are of no weight.

For when they say that the formal object of Penance is an injury to divine right, equally applicable to one's own sins and to those of others, they rely on a false foundation. The object of Penance is not an injury to divine right in just any fashion, but as capable of compensation through the conversion of the will itself.

Accordingly, when they assert further that the object of Penance is sin, abstracting from whether it belongs to oneself or another, they content themselves with a gratuitous assertion. For sin, or an injury to divine right, cannot inspire Penance in just any manner, but only as expiable and compensable through the conversion of the will. Moreover, if their assertion were true, it would follow that in Christ there was true Penance, which, although it is not displeasing to Suárez and Lugo (cf. the following article, p. 386), runs contrary to the common judgment of theologians.

When, moreover, they add that Penance can reach another's sins under the aspect of sorrow and compensation although not under the aspect of retraction, they again proceed from a false

supposition. For penitential sorrow and compensation for sin can consist in nothing other than the retraction of the will itself. Since Penance is simultaneously and essentially both retractive and compensatory, these two aspects cannot be separated from one another; rather, by the very same act by which Penance retracts, it also makes compensation.

Finally, when they object that a man can by the same virtue discharge both his own debts and those of another, as appears both in debts between men and in supernatural satisfaction by which a just man applies his good satisfactory works for the benefit of others, they again forget the formal object of Penance. For this is not compensation or satisfaction of just any kind, but compensation for sin, of such a kind as is made through the conversion of the sinful will itself. Now one will cannot be converted through the conversion of another, and hence no one can repent through Penance for the sins of another, just as no one can become humble or chaste through another's humility or chastity. Herein lies the difference from the satisfaction of good works applied for others. For such satisfaction is made not for guilt but for temporal punishment; and it consists not in the conversion of the will but only in the performance of some work. By reason of charity, which is the bond uniting the members of the mystical body, the work of one person may have value before God as satisfaction for another; but the will of one person cannot be counted as the will of another for the purpose of contrition, since the very lack of contrition presupposes that he is severed from the mystical body, which is united by contrition and charity.

St. Thomas, in Commentary on the Sentences, IV, dist. 20, q. 1, a. 2, qu. 3, reply to objection 2, answers an opponent who, from the alleged parity between contrition, confession, and satisfaction, argues that a just man cannot make satisfaction for another any more than he can be contrite for another. He replies: "Contrition is ordered against guilt, which pertains to the disposition of a man's goodness or wickedness; and therefore by the contrition of one person another is not freed from guilt. Similarly, through confession a man submits himself to the sacraments of the Church. But one person cannot receive a sacrament for another, since in the sacrament grace is given to the recipient, not to another. And therefore the same reasoning does not apply to satisfaction, contrition, and confession."

Finally, Lugo's artificial distinctions between partial habits, between an acquired and an infused habit, and between two habits, whether acquired or infused, are false. The first distinction dissolves in the light of Thomistic and sound philosophy, which teaches that a habit is a simple and indivisible quality; the second is shown to be false in Article XVI, where it is demonstrated that natural or acquired Penance is not truly a habit of virtue; the third seems to miss the point and to be mere wordplay. For if the sins of others are reached through a habit different from that which reaches one's own sins, whatever the nature and character of this habit, which Lugo introduces in the middle to detest the sins of others, may be, it follows that the sins of others are not reached through Penance, which in Tradition is understood under the name Penance.

NOTE I. ON THE ADEQUATE OBJECT OF THE VIRTUE OF PENANCE

The material object is sin itself insofar as it constitutes a violation of divine right, to be reached by the act of the virtue of Penance itself.

This object is composed of three grades or subordinated formal aspects, namely, sin, a violation of divine right (or divine right as violated), and the act of the virtue. Hence arise the different ways of

speaking among the Doctors, who assign as the material object of Penance sometimes sin, sometimes divine right, and sometimes the act of the penitent. Strictly speaking, the proximate and immediate material object is the very act of the virtue, for a virtue is nothing other than an inclination toward an act. Thus St. Thomas simply says that the "matter [or object] of Penance is human acts." But since sin and the violation of divine right are objects of an act of Penance, they thereby become also the mediate and remote object of the virtue itself. Accordingly, a violation of divine right (and in this way divine right itself) is the less remote object, while sin is the remote object; and in this sense sin is the first thing considered in the object of Penance and is not infrequently called the object simply and without qualification.

The formal object *quod*, that is, that from which the virtue is immediately specified, is the character of satisfaction by means of sorrowful amendment. This character immediately affects the act of the penitent and remotely affects sin insofar as it is a violation of divine right; accordingly, it affects the act of the penitent as containing satisfaction, amendment, and sorrow, and sin or the violation of divine right as expiable, amendable, and worthy of sorrow. This formal object in turn contains three aspects subordinated to one another, as was said in Conclusion I: satisfaction, which is most formally such, is founded upon amendment, and amendment upon sorrow. Hence too arise the different ways in which the Doctors assign the formal object of this virtue, according as they explicitly consider one or another of these three aspects.

The formal object *quo*, or the innermost aspect under which the formal object *quod* is capable of specifying the virtue and being attained by it, is the particular moral excellence, or moral goodness, that shines forth in the satisfaction described above. For goodness stands in relation to the will as immateriality stands in relation to the intellect; each is the ultimate aspect and, as it were, the bond by which an object is joined to either faculty and becomes an object of willing or understanding.

Some introduce God—for example, as one to be appeased or as one with whom man is to be reconciled—when speaking of the object of Penance. But, as we said both here in Conclusion I (against Lugo) and in Article XII (Conclusion IV), God, His appeasement, and reconciliation with Him belong not to the object, but to the end, although an immediate end. In this respect Penance agrees with the common virtue of religion and differs from the other moral virtues, which regard God as an end only mediately. Thus appeasement and reconciliation themselves constitute the end *which* is sought (*finis qui*), while God Himself is, as it were, the end *for whom* it is sought (*finis cui*).

NOTE II. DEFINITION OF THE VIRTUE OF PENANCE

From its object, and principally from its formal object, we understand how this virtue is to be defined. For its definition must briefly include the character of a virtue, the character of this particular virtue, or potential part of justice, and both its formal and its material object.

It can therefore be aptly defined thus: A VIRTUE INCLINING ONE TO MAKE SATISFACTION FOR AN OFFENSE INFLICTED UPON GOD THROUGH SIN.

Here the word "virtue" supplies the genus, while the word "inclining" expresses the native character of the remote genus, or habit. The remaining words supply the specific difference, so that they signify both what is, as it were, the proximate genus—the character of justice—and the formal object —the character of satisfaction—as well as the threefold material object: the act of the penitent, the character of offense, and the matter of sin.

The more celebrated definitions of the Fathers,[201] several of which St. Thomas reports and explains in his Commentary on the Sentences, IV, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, qu. 6, are as follows:

[201] Compare above, in the preceding article, pp. 351 ff., the definitions of the principal act of Penance, or contrition, from which the very character of this virtue is derived.

Tertullian: "A certain suffering of the soul, arising from the offense of an earlier [another reading: worse] judgment" (at the place cited on p. 98).

Lactantius: "Sorrow over an error, one's own chastisement, and the purpose of not sinning thereafter" (cf. the place cited on p. 10).

Ambrose: "Through Penance, while we grieve for what we have committed, we exclude what we might commit" (On Penance, II, ch. 10; Migne, Patrologia Latina 16, 541). Likewise: "True Penance is sorrow of heart and bitterness of soul over the evils that each person has committed" (Sermon 25, On Lent, no. 9; PL 17, 677).

Augustine: "Let us consider what is customarily involved in the work of repenting among men. Doubtless there is found a will to change; but ... it is accompanied by sorrow of soul, for a man censures in himself what he has rashly done" (On Various Questions to Simplician, II, q. 2, no. 4; PL 40, 141).

Jerome: "True Penance is continually to wash away with tears what one has committed, and not to repeat what has been taken away" (Breviary on the Psalms, on Psalm 118, *Phe*; PL 26, 1274).

Gennadius of Marseilles: "True Penance is not to commit things requiring repentance and to bewail those already committed. Satisfaction belonging to Penance consists in cutting off the causes of sins and in granting no entrance to their suggestions" (Book of Ecclesiastical Doctrines, ch. 54; PL 58, 994).[202]

[202] This book is also found among the works of Augustine, to whom it was formerly attributed; cf. Migne, Patrologia Latina 42, 1218, under chapter 24.

Gregory the Great: "To do Penance is both to lament evil deeds committed and not to commit deeds that would have to be lamented" (at the place cited on p. 10).

Isidore of Seville: "It is called Penance, as though it were punishment, because through repenting a person punishes in himself what he has wrongly committed" (at the place cited on p. 5).

Pseudo-Augustine, On True and False Penance: "Penance is a punishment, ever punishing in oneself what one grieves to have committed" (at the place cited on p. 5).

The Master of the Sentences, casting the descriptions of the Fathers into the form of a definition, says: "Penance is a virtue or grace by which we lament and hate the evils committed, with the purpose of amendment, and resolve not to commit what would have to be lamented in the future; for true Penance consists in sorrowing in the mind and hating vices" (Sentences, IV, dist. 14, no. 1; PL 192, 869; cf. dist. 15, toward the end).

In these definitions two elements are constantly found: sorrow or detestation of sin, and the purpose of avoiding sin. Moreover, Augustine and the Master of the Sentences indicate the more formal characteristic of amendment, or change of will, which is contained in sorrow itself. Finally, Lactantius, Isidore, and especially Pseudo-Augustine indicate the most formal characteristic of

punishment or justice, contained in that same sorrowful amendment. Hence St. Thomas, who in articles 1, 2, and 3 offers the various elements of a definition rather than directly proposing a definition of his own, seems to prefer, as the most complete, the definition of the Master of the Sentences; or indeed the more formal definition of Pseudo-Augustine, which he also cites in the *On the Contrary* of article 3.

On the matter itself, St. Thomas says in his Commentary on the Sentences, IV, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, qu. 6:

"These two things must be exhibited by a man in his heart through Penance: first, sorrow of heart for the evils he has done; secondly, a purpose of not committing such things henceforth. And these two things are comprehended by the aforesaid definition [of Ambrose and Gregory], although it is not proposed in the form of a definition. Hence the Master, reducing it to the proper form, sets down three things: the genus, in what he says, 'it is a virtue'; sorrow over past things, in what he says, 'by which we lament evils committed'; and the purpose of future amendment, in what he says, 'with the purpose of amendment.' The other things that are said pertain to these same points."

And in his reply to objection 6 of the same question he says:

"It is not unfitting for different definitions of the same thing to be given according to different aspects found in it. Accordingly, the aforesaid definition of Gregory and Ambrose, which the Master reduces to the form of a definition, is the most complete, for it touches upon the genus, the act, and the object, and both of the things required for offering amendment to God. The definition of Augustine [that is, Pseudo-Augustine, On True and False Penance] placed in the text comes to the same thing, namely, 'Penance is a certain punishment of one who sorrows,' and so forth; except that it expresses more clearly its proximate genus, because it places Penance not merely in the genus of virtue but in the genus of justice, in calling it a punishment; and it also sets down differences more proximate to its proper species, in adding to sorrow the character of punishment."

Article 15. Whether the proximate subject of the virtue of Penance is the will, while its remote subject is every and only a mere human being

ARTICLE XV

Whether the Proximate Subject of the Virtue of Penance Is the Will, and Its

Remote Subject Every and Only a Mere Human Being

(Summa Theologiae, III, q. 85, a. 4; cf. Commentary on the Sentences, IV, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 3; or Supplement, q. 16.)

STATE OF THE QUESTION

A twofold question is raised. The first concerns the proximate subject, or faculty, which is the immediate principle of operation. The other concerns the remote subject, or nature and supposit, which are the remote principle of acts and passions. The first question presupposes the real distinction both of the faculties—namely, intellect, will, and the concupiscible and irascible sensitive appetites—from the essence of the soul, and of the virtues from the essence of sanctifying grace. For if the faculties were not distinguished from the essence of the soul, or the virtues from the essence of

grace, Penance, like any other virtue, would be immediately subject in the very essence of the soul, which is the subject of sanctifying grace. The other question involves the distribution of natures and supposits into God, an angel, and man; and, in man, into one assumed into the divine personality through hypostatic union and a mere man, that is, one possessing a created personality.

It is therefore asked:

1. Whether Penance is in the will alone, and not in the intellect or in the concupiscible or irascible appetite.

2. Whether Penance exists in every and only a mere human being, and accordingly even in Adam before his sin, in baptized infants, in the Blessed Virgin, and in the blessed; but in no way in God, in Christ, or in an angel.

NEGATIVE AND AFFIRMATIVE POSITIONS

ON THE FIRST QUESTION: THE PROXIMATE SUBJECT

Certain older theologians, such as the theologian of Auxerre and Alexander of Hales, mentioned above in Article XII (p. 280), since they teach that Penance is not a particular virtue but a general condition of every virtue, consequently say that its proximate subject is all the faculties of the soul. St. Thomas briefly mentions them in Commentary on the Sentences, IV, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 3, qu. 1, when he asks whether Penance is in all the virtues; and he sets forth their reasoning in the form of an objection (ibid., objection 1): "Nothing acts where it is not. But Penance expels sin from every faculty. Therefore it is in every faculty."

Other older theologians, similarly mentioned by St. Thomas in the same place, taught that the subject of Penance is the concupiscible appetite, on the ground that Penance consists in sorrow, which is a passion of that appetite. The Doctor sets out their argument thus (ibid., objection 1): "Penance is a species of sadness. But sadness is in the concupiscible appetite, as is joy. Therefore Penance is in the concupiscible appetite."

Still other older theologians, whom St. Thomas likewise mentions there, said that the subject of Penance is the irascible appetite, since Penance is a kind of vengeance and accordingly pertains to anger, which is the passion of that appetite, or of the appetite for vengeance. He sets forth their argument (ibid., objection 2): "Penance is a kind of vengeance, as Augustine [Pseudo-Augustine] says in the book On Penance. But vengeance seems to pertain to the irascible appetite, to which anger belongs, since anger is the appetite for vengeance. Therefore Penance seems to be in the irascible appetite."

Alexander of Hales (Summa Theologiae, IV, q. 12, member 2) appears to teach that Penance is not simply subject in the will, but in free choice: whether this is understood as a certain faculty for choosing means, distinct from the will as the faculty intending the end, or as intellect and will jointly concurring in choice. The reason is that Penance is a kind of justice; therefore it involves judgment concerning right and consequently pertains also to the intellect.

Bonaventure (Commentary on the Sentences, IV, dist. 4, a. 2, q. 1) teaches that the subject of Penance is indeed the will alone, yet not formally insofar as it is the rational appetite eminently concupiscible, but insofar as it is irascible. The reason is that Penance is punitive and vindicatory.

Others, such as Peter de Palude, Soto, Valencia, and Suárez (disp. 7, sect. 1), distinguish a twofold habit of Penance: one in the will alone, from which the rational act of detesting sin is elicited; the other in the concupiscible appetite, ordered toward regulating sensible passion or sorrow over sin. The reason is that such sorrow is a virtuous and praiseworthy act, and therefore demands its own species of virtue, from which it may be elicited and regulated.

The common opinion of theologians, with St. Thomas, is that the subject of Penance is the will alone, and indeed insofar as it is eminently the rational concupiscible appetite.

ON THE SECOND QUESTION: THE REMOTE SUBJECT

Within the affirmative position (cf. the state of the question), which is almost common among Thomists, the following opinions are held in part:

Some teach that the virtue of Penance was also in Christ.

The Scotists, in keeping with their position that Penance consists in a kind of vengeance or satisfaction for punishment (cf. Article XII above, pp. 284 ff.), say that in Christ there was also its proper and principal act, since Christ truly and properly made satisfaction for us. Moreover, even according to the Scotist position which teaches that Christ's impeccability was not absolute and essential, but arose from the beatific vision alone and divine assistance, as in the blessed and the Blessed Virgin, it would follow that at least the habit of Penance existed in Christ.

Suárez (disp. 7, sect. 1, nos. 10 ff.; likewise On the Incarnate Word, disp. 19, sect. 1), Lugo (disp. 6, nos. 4 ff.), and Coninck (disp. 1, dub. 3) teach that Christ possessed the habit of Penance and even its act, namely hatred of sin, although it was not the specific and absolute act of satisfactory detestation from which Penance takes its name. In other words, they say that in Christ there was the habit of Penance in its entity, although not according to its denomination, and an act of Penance, although not an act of satisfactory detestation. Their reason is that in the act of detesting sin insofar as it is a violation of divine right (Suárez), or a disturbance of peace with God (Lugo), the character of Penance and its formal object are preserved (cf. the preceding article, pp. 358 ff.).

Some, such as Vázquez, Biel, and Collet, teach that Penance existed in angels during the state of their wayfaring life, since they were able to sin.

Some, such as Vázquez, Nugnus, De Augustinis, Hugon, and Keuppens, deny that the virtue of Penance existed in the Blessed Virgin. Their reason is that she was in fact impeccable, or confirmed in grace; and when the matter, or even the possibility of sinning, is absent, the habit is lacking.

Some, such as Vázquez, deny that this virtue existed in Adam in the state of innocence or exists in the blessed, at least those who have not sinned.

CONCLUSION I

The proximate subject of the virtue of Penance is the will itself and the will alone, not all the faculties generally, nor in particular the intellect or the concupiscible or irascible appetite.

Proof

For, as St. Thomas reasons, Penance is a certain species of justice, while justice resides in the will. Nor does it matter that Penance is called a species of justice only improperly, that is, a potential part

of justice; for all the parts of a virtue, whether subjective or potential, must be in the same subject as the virtue itself, since they belong to the same line, or are concerned with the same object, or possess the same manner of attaining their object.

The same is immediately clear from consideration of the proper object and act of Penance, which is amendatory satisfaction through sorrow for sin. For all of this consists in a certain act of the will, namely, the turning of the will away from sin and the turning of that same will toward divine right and toward God.

It also follows from the fact that all virtues have their subject in the will, except those which regard the assent or judgment of reason—namely, faith and prudence, which are in the intellect—and those which have for their object the regulation of sensible passions—namely, fortitude and temperance, which are in the irascible and concupiscible appetites. But Penance does not regard the assent and judgment of reason, although these are presupposed through the influence of prudence, which governs every moral virtue; nor is it ordered to regulating a passion, although sensible sorrow may be conjoined with it and commanded by it, a sorrow elicited and regulated by the concupiscible appetite under the influence of prudence.

Hence the Falsity of the Other Opinions

From this the falsity of the opinions related above becomes evident. Thus Penance:

IS NOT IN EVERY FACULTY

For it is not a general condition of all the virtues, but a special virtue and habit; indeed, "one habit cannot be in more than one power, just as one form cannot belong to more than one matter, and one accident cannot belong to more than one subject" (Commentary on the Sentences, IV, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 3, qu. 1). Nor does it matter that Penance in some way influences every faculty by expelling every sin opposed to any virtue. For, as was said in Article XII (reply to objection 10, p. 315 ff.), it does this not formally, by its own presence, but in a certain manner by the position of each virtue in relation to the sin contrary to itself, and effectively or operatively through the very act of sorrow which detests sin (Commentary on the Sentences, at the place cited, reply to objection 1).

IS NOT IN THE CONCUPISCIBLE APPETITE

For sensible sorrow is not the formal and elicited act of Penance, but only its material act, commanded by it (ibid., reply to objection 2; here, reply to objection 1).

IS NOT IN THE IRASCIBLE APPETITE

For the movement of vengeance contained in anger arises from a passion and regards another person, whereas the movement of vengeance which is in some way contained in Penance arises from reason and regards the subject himself. Moreover, even vindicatory justice, although it concerns another person, is not in the irascible appetite but in the will, precisely because it is a movement not of passion but of reason (here, reply to objection 2). The movement of passion by which the sinner is said in a certain manner to be angry with himself and to avenge upon himself the divine right violated by sin is merely a material act commanded by Penance but elicited by the sensitive appetite. Nor, moreover, is it properly a passion of anger or vengeance, since it is not directed against another person,[203]but is identified with sensible hatred and sorrow, and therefore pertains not to the irascible but to the concupiscible appetite.

[203] 1–2, q. 46, a. 7, reply to objection 2: "Properly speaking ... it does not of itself happen that someone is angry with himself."

IS NOT IN FREE CHOICE IN THE SENSE GIVEN BY THE MASTER OF HALES

That is, whether free choice is taken as a faculty distinct from the will, for no such faculty exists; or whether it is understood as the intellect and will taken together. For although an intellectual judgment is required beforehand to move and regulate the act of the will, the intellect does not thereby itself become the subject of that regulation or virtue, but the will alone does;[204]just as, conversely, although a virtuous disposition of the appetite is required beforehand for a right judgment, the subject of judgment is not the appetite itself but the intellect alone.[205]Thus the reasoning advanced by the Master of Hales collapses. However, it may be conceded that the will is the subject of Penance not insofar as it is the faculty of intending the end, for in this way it is the subject of charity alone, but insofar as it is the faculty for choosing means, or free choice;[206]yet this distinction within the will does not introduce a distinction of faculties, but only of activities.

[204] Cf. 2–2, q. 58, a. 4.

[205] Cf. 2–2, q. 60, a. 1, replies to objections 1 and 2.

[206] Cf. 2–2, q. 24, a. 1, reply to objection 3.

IS NOT IN THE WILL AS EMINENTLY IRASCIBLE

Rather, it is in the will as concupiscible. For although Penance has something in common with vindicatory justice, it differs essentially from it; indeed, it is reduced not to vindicatory justice as a potential part, but to commutative justice, as was said in Article XII (pp. 304 ff.). Hence it belongs to the concupiscible tendency, since it consists in sorrow or sadness, which is a passion of the concupiscible appetite.

NOR CAN TWO HABITS OF PENANCE BE MAINTAINED

One of which would be in the will and the other in the sensitive appetite. For the habit regulating sensible sorrow over sin in the sensitive appetite, if such a habit were granted, would not properly be the habit of Penance; since in sensible sorrow the proper object and act of Penance are not preserved, namely, amendatory satisfaction for sin, which consists solely in the change and sorrow of the will. Moreover, the aforesaid habit, however it may be understood, is not necessary (and therefore is not granted), since for commanding and regulating sensible sorrow over sin, insofar as it is a virtuous and praiseworthy act, the combined influence of Penance and prudence suffices.

The following words of St. Thomas manifestly support this position. He says (here, reply to objection 4): "The will ... moves all the other powers of the soul; and therefore it is not unfitting that, when the power [or habit of Penance] exists in the will, it should perform something in each of the powers of the soul." In his Commentary on the Sentences, IV, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 3, qu. 4, he says: "Penance is understood among us in two ways: in one way insofar as it is a passion, for thus it is nothing other than sorrow or sadness over an evil committed [that is, a certain act] ...; in another way it is understood insofar as it is a virtue [or habit]."

Gonet speaks to the point: "Although Penance as a passion resides in the sensitive appetite, nevertheless, considered as a virtue, it exists neither there, even as a complement, nor anywhere except in the will. First, because in the will alone must reside the immediate subjecting power, whose

acts can immediately attain its object; but such are not the acts of the sensitive appetite, since they are bodily acts, whereas the object of Penance is something spiritual, namely, divine right violated, capable of reparation through satisfaction. Secondly, because the sorrow existing in the sensitive appetite, although, speaking ordinarily, it follows upon the act of Penance, and indeed is often all the greater the greater the sorrow of the heart that constitutes Penance, nevertheless is neither essential to Penance nor simply necessary for it. Thirdly, because the difficulty that exists in the sensitive appetite in eliciting an act of Penance is sufficiently removed by the virtue of temperance, whose proper function is to moderate every delight and sadness. Therefore, to overcome this difficulty, a virtue of Penance in the sensitive appetite is not required; although in it the virtue of liberality ought to be placed, which moderates the disordered love of money, since there is presupposed in it no virtue that can restrain such an effect."[207]

[207] Gonet, De Poenitentia, disp. 2, a. 3, § 6, no. 86, Clypeus, vol. 6 (Paris, 1876), p. 536.

CONCLUSION II

The remote subject of the virtue of Penance is every mere human being and only a mere human being; consequently it is found even in Adam in the state of innocence, in infants recently baptized, in the Blessed Virgin, and in all the blessed, but not in God, Christ, or the angels in any state.

Proof

The habit of Penance can exist wherever its matter or object can be found. But the matter or object of Penance, which is sin capable of amendment through satisfaction or a change of will, can be found in every mere human being and in a mere human being alone. Therefore the habit of Penance can exist in every mere human being and in him alone; in other words, he is the remote subject of this virtue.

Proof of the Minor Premise

For every mere human being has either sin—as is true of the blessed in whom sin preceded—or at least the power of sinning—as in Adam in the state of innocence, recently baptized infants, and, in a certain respect, the Blessed Virgin—and therefore either the amendment or the possibility of amending sin. In every other subject, on the contrary, both sin and the power of sinning are lacking (as in God and Christ), or else the power of amending it is lacking (as in the angels). Hence to repent, or to recover from sin, is proper to man: God cannot sin, an angel cannot recover from sin, but man can do both. The particular cases must be explained.

THERE IS NO PENANCE IN GOD

For the power of sinning is lacking in Him absolutely and in every respect. Hence, when Scripture says that God repents, the expression is taken broadly for a certain act of detestation, and analogically with reference to what occurs in man.

THERE IS NO PENANCE IN CHRIST AS MAN

For His impeccability is absolute and essential, arising not from His nature, as it does in God, but solely from the divine suppositum of that nature. Hence St. Thomas says (Commentary on the Sentences, IV, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 3, qu. 3, reply to objection 2): "Christ could not sin ...; and therefore the matter of this virtue belongs to Him neither in act nor in potency; and for this reason the case of Himself and that of others are not alike."

This doctrine received no slight confirmation from a decree of the Holy Office of 15 July 1893. On the occasion of a movement begun at Loigny in France by Mathilde Marchat, aimed at spreading devotion to the Penitent Heart of Jesus, the decree condemned the following titles as dangerous novelties concerning the dogmas of faith: *The Penitent Heart of Jesus*, *The Heart of Jesus Penitent for Us*, *Jesus Penitent*, and *Jesus Penitent for Us*.[208] The text of the decree reads: "On Wednesday, 15 July 1893, the Most Eminent and Reverend Lord Fathers, the Cardinal Inquisitors General, decreed: The Holy Roman and Universal Inquisition had already, by the decree of Wednesday, 13 January 1875, given general counsel that no new titles of worship should be introduced, especially concerning the title of 'Our Lord Jesus Christ the Penitent.' Since, however, it has come to the knowledge of this Supreme Congregation that Loigny still obstinately maintains what it calls the Work of the Sacred Heart of Jesus the Penitent, and since its authors and supporters, although repeatedly condemned by the Supreme Pontiff, do not cease from sacrilegious audacity in devising and publishing visions and revelations of the Heart of Jesus the Penitent, the Holy Roman and Universal Inquisition, after mature consideration, absolutely prohibits and condemns the titles: The Penitent Heart of Jesus; The Heart of Jesus Penitent for Us; Jesus Penitent; Jesus Penitent for Us." "It further directs the Ordinaries of places where societies have been erected under titles of this sort to arrange that another title, approved in the Church, be substituted for the condemned one, and not to allow such societies to continue unless everything has been carried out in accordance with the rules of law." "Finally, it calls to everyone's remembrance the decree of Wednesday, 13 January 1875, transcribed here: On Wednesday, 13 January 1875, His Holiness Our Lord Pius IX, by Divine Providence Pope, at the usual audience granted to the Reverend Father Assessor of the Holy Office, commanded that writers should be admonished who devote their talents to arguments savoring of novelty and who, under the appearance of piety, seek to promote unusual titles of devotion even by means of newspapers. They should desist from their undertaking and should weigh the danger of leading the faithful into error, even concerning dogmas of faith, and of furnishing an occasion for the enemies of religion to detract from the purity of the faith, of Catholic doctrine, and of true piety."[209]

[208] On this question consult Analecta Ecclesiastica, 1894, vol. 2, pp. 291–301; Nouvelle Revue Théologique, 1893, p. 496 ff.

[209] Acta Sanctae Sedis (ed. V. Piazzesi), vol. 26 (Rome, 1893–1894), p. 319.

The opinion of the Scotists rests on a false foundation. For to repent is not principally and formally to make satisfaction for a punishment, but to grieve, or to make satisfaction for sin, by means of sorrow. The same must be said of the gratuitous assertion of Suárez and Lugo that an act of Penance is preserved in a detestation which is not a satisfactory sorrow for one's own sin. For the rest, no one denies that Christ possessed the virtue of Penance in an eminent but most improper sense—one that ought to be entirely excluded from theological discourse—inasmuch as, moved by other virtues, especially charity, justice, and religion, He was affected with the greatest detestation and sorrow for the sins of others and made satisfaction for them with His whole heart in our place, offering "the greatest example to penitents" (III, q. 15, a. 1, reply to objection 5; cf. q. 46, a. 6, body and replies to objections 2 and 4).

SUÁREZ OBJECTS

Christ possesses a will of the same nature as ours, although not under the aspect of a power capable of sinning. Therefore the virtue of Penance, of the same entity or essential constitution as ours,

belongs to Him, although not under the aspect of amendment but solely under the aspect of detesting sin as an offense against God.

REPLY

I deny the consequence and the alleged parity. For it is not essential to the will that it be a power capable of sinning, whereas it is essential to Penance that it be an amendment of one's own sin and not simply any detestation whatever of sin. Hence in Christ a true human will is preserved, separate from the power of sinning, but the true character of Penance cannot be preserved when separated from the character of amendment.

SUÁREZ INSISTS

It does not follow from Christ's being impeccable that the virtue of Penance is excluded from Him. For the impossibility of the matter and object of a virtue does not exclude the interior disposition and conditioned will rightly directed toward the matter of that virtue; consequently it does not exclude the habit of the virtue. For that reason, because of such an interior disposition, there is a virtue of virginity even in a corrupted man, and there is the virtue of Penance both in innocent Adam and in the Blessed Virgin, who, because of the gift of confirmation in grace, could not sin.

REPLY

If the impossibility of the matter and object is merely conditional, depending on the circumstances or the condition of the subject, it does not exclude the aforesaid interior disposition and will, and consequently does not exclude the habit of the virtue, although it excludes its act; this appears in the three cases mentioned in the objection. But if that impossibility is absolute and essential, as in Christ, it simply excludes those dispositions of the will and consequently the very habit of the virtue. For a conditioned willing of something absolutely impossible—for example, if a man should say, "If I were God or an angel, I would do this or that," or if Christ should say, "If by an impossibility I sinned, I would immediately and profoundly repent"—is a merely fanciful willing with respect to that impossible object. For whatever is voluntary in it is referred rather to some other object toward which the will is truly affected; it is therefore insufficient to constitute a habit of virtue, or an elective habit of the good. If, moreover, it were sufficient to constitute a habit, it would follow that there is no virtue which cannot exist in any will whatsoever, so that there would be temperance and chastity in the angels, faith and hope in the blessed and in Christ Himself, and even Penance in God.

St. Thomas himself overturns Suárez's objection in *Disputed Questions on Hope*, article 4, objection 11 and reply to objection 11. He raises the objection as follows: "An act of virtue appears to consist not only in doing, or in willing to do, what pertains to the virtue when the power is present, but also in willing to do it if the power were present. For an act of justice is to will to repay the money due, even if someone cannot have the money. But the saints in their homeland are so disposed that they would await beatitude even if they did not possess it. Therefore in them there is an act of hope. But an act proceeds from a habit. Therefore in them there is the virtue of hope." He replies: "The object of a virtue can be lacking in two ways. In one way, while the possibility of possessing it remains; and thus there can be an act of virtue and the virtue itself even in respect of an object not possessed, under this condition, if the power were present. In another way, while the possibility of possessing it is absent; and thus neither the habit nor the act remains. For in this way the object of hope is removed in the homeland, because henceforth it will never be possible for beatitude to be future."

LUGO OBJECTS

"Where the absolute acts of Penance are not repugnant by the nature of the thing, although they are repugnant here and now because of some circumstance, the infused, elicitive habit of those acts is not repugnant. For habits regard not what a subject can do in the light of all circumstances, but what it can do simply. In all those subjects [namely Christ, the Blessed Virgin, Adam, the blessed, and the innocent], insofar as the subject is concerned, acts of absolute detestation were not repugnant, although they are repugnant here and now because of some circumstance. Therefore in all of them there could have been an elicitive habit, insofar as it was of itself, of that absolute detestation. ... Hence I infer that the same must be said of Christ the Lord. For although He may not possess that habit under the denomination of Penance, as I have said, because of the intrinsic impeccability of the subject, nevertheless acts of this sort were not repugnant to Him, either on the part of His humanity or even on the part of the suppositum considered in itself. For it was not repugnant that humanity should have been assumed by the suppositum of the Word after sin had been committed; and then that Man-God could have elicited a perfect detestation of a sin previously committed by that humanity. Therefore, speaking in itself, an act of perfect Penance is not more repugnant to the hypostatic union than is the memory of sin; but in fact it was repugnant, inasmuch as that humanity was not supposed to have sinned before its union with the Word."[210]

[210] Lugo, De Poenitentia, disp. 6, nos. 7–11, Disputationes Scholasticae, vol. 4 (Paris, 1892), pp. 467 ff.

Suárez expresses the same reasoning thus: If the Word had assumed the humanity of some man who already possessed the virtue of Penance, He would not have destroyed that virtue but would rather have preserved it in the assumed humanity. Yet that humanity would be just as impeccable as the humanity actually assumed by the Word. Hence the character of impeccability does not exclude the habit of Penance from Christ.

REPLY

The argument put forward by Lugo applies to the other subjects enumerated, but not to Christ, because of His absolute impeccability. As for what both Lugo and Suárez gratuitously assert about the existence of Penance in Christ under the hypothesis of the assumption of some humanity that had sinned or had possessed the virtue of Penance in a prior suppositum, this must simply be denied. For the aforesaid humanity in the prior suppositum was capable of sinning, whereas in the suppositum of the Word it is absolutely impeccable. Consequently, in the former it could repent, but in the latter it cannot, even of a sin that may have been committed in another suppositum, since both actions and passions, as well as sins and Penance, belong to supposita.

THE VIRTUE OF PENANCE EXISTED IN THE BLESSED VIRGIN[211]

The principal reason is that in the Blessed Virgin, unlike Christ, an absolute capacity to sin remained, because it is proper to a created suppositum; and this capacity suffices to specify and bring about the habit of Penance in her. For although the Blessed Virgin was without any sin, indeed was in fact impeccable, this impeccability was not, as in Christ, absolute and essential, arising from the very principles of her being. Every created suppositum is and remains essentially capable of defect; rather, her impeccability was conditional and superadded, proceeding from the state in which the Blessed Virgin was found, namely from the gift of confirmation in grace. That gift did not in any way extinguish the absolute capacity to sin in her, just as it did not extinguish the proper character of a

creature; and indeed, if that gift had been removed, the Blessed Virgin would still have been capable, by nature, of sinning. This absolute capacity, which remained in the Blessed Virgin, is sufficient to specify the habit of Penance. For although the presence of the matter or object is required in order that the habit may be brought into act, the possibility of the matter suffices for possessing the habit, as St. Thomas teaches (Commentary on the Sentences, IV, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 3, qu. 2, cited below). Nor does it matter that this possibility is absolute and not one of actual occurrence, for an absolute possibility is a true possibility. Furthermore, if the conditional impossibility of sinning prevented the habit of Penance, the same habit would not be granted even in recently baptized infants and in the blessed, who in fact cannot sin because of their state.

[211] On this point, which some seem to dispute, even among modern theologians, it is commonly taught by Suárez, Lugo, Gonet, the Salmanticenses, Collet, Lépicer, Merkelbach, Amann, and Dubianchy.

Another reason is that in the Blessed Virgin, by nature and prior to receiving the confirming gift, there was the same power of actually sinning that is in ourselves. In her, as in us, that power was taken away through the gift of confirmation in grace—or rather was so bound that it became a conditional impossibility of sinning—not so much by being prior to it as by being able to be removed. Thus the virtue of Penance was in the Blessed Virgin as well, infused together with the other virtues and sanctifying grace. These were, as it were, subsequently confirmed, since it is prior to be in grace than to be confirmed in grace.

In other words, in the first instant of her conception the Blessed Virgin is understood, according to the order of nature, first to have existed with her natural conditions, among which is the power to sin; secondly, to have had the debt of contracting original sin as a daughter of Adam; thirdly, to have been released from this debt through the merits of the future Redeemer, so that she did not contract original sin; fourthly, to have received sanctifying grace and the virtues flowing from it, including Penance, corresponding to the natural power of sinning; fifthly, to have received the gift whereby she was confirmed in that grace and those virtues, lest she should lose them through sin—however this gift is to be understood, whether as a subsequent and distinct help or as the very degree of most abundant grace, since grace is prior to its degree. This gift of confirmation, however, did not extinguish the virtue of Penance, because it did not extinguish the absolute power of sinning; rather, it confirmed the virtue itself, just as the beatific vision, which causes an intrinsic impossibility of sinning, does not expel Penance from the blessed, since it does not expel their absolute power of sinning, which can be extinguished in human nature only through the hypostatic union.

This is confirmed by parity with the blessed. For the virtue of Penance is in them although impeccability is present; therefore, by parity of reasoning, it existed in the Blessed Virgin notwithstanding her impeccability. This reasoning becomes an argument *a fortiori* if, as some say, the Blessed Virgin's impeccability was extrinsic: for it is agreed by all that the impeccability of the blessed is intrinsic, although not absolute and essential, as in Christ, but conditional and accidental, or arising from the beatific state. Nor does it matter that the blessed retain the Penance which they possessed in their wayfaring state, since this very fact that it is not extinguished by the state of glory shows that a nonessential impeccability is not incompatible with the virtue of Penance. Moreover, as has been said, the infusion of the virtue of Penance in the Blessed Virgin is, by nature, prior to the gift of confirmation.

The same is also confirmed by the teaching of St. Thomas. Although he does not address this question concerning the Blessed Virgin, he seems to suppose our doctrine in his *Commentary on the Sentences*, IV, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 3, qu. 3, reply to objection 2 (cited above, p. 390), where he says that only Christ lacks the matter of Penance both in act and in potency; and in the same place, question 2 (to be cited below, p. 398), where he says that the habit can be found in any subject in which its matter can be present.

OBJECTION I

A habit that cannot pass into act is useless.

REPLY

A habit which absolutely cannot pass into act is useless, as the habit of Penance would be in the humanity of Christ; not, however, a habit which cannot pass into act merely because of some condition. For if the condition of confirmation in grace were removed, the habit of Penance in the Blessed Virgin could pass into act, since she would no longer be impeccable; just as, if the condition of the beatific state were removed, the Penance of the blessed could produce an act of sorrow.

Hence the habit of Penance imparted to the Blessed Virgin the disposition of soul such that, if sin had occurred—which was absolutely possible although not in fact possible—she would have repented of it and grieved over it. Moreover, although such a habit could not in fact pass into an absolute act, it could nevertheless pass into a conditional act regarding sin ("If by an impossibility I sinned, I would immediately grieve over it"), which is not a fanciful willing, as it would be in Christ, since it does not concern a thing absolutely impossible. Likewise, the habit of Penance in the Blessed Virgin could pass into a secondary act, which is to give thanks to God for His aforesaid gift of preservation from sin that was absolutely possible; just as, according to St. Thomas, the habit of Penance in the blessed passes into the act "of giving thanks to God for His mercy in remitting sins" (*Commentary on the Sentences*, IV, cited below). Likewise, it may be said that the habit of Penance in the Blessed Virgin passed into the secondary act of detesting the sins of other men, insofar as they are defects of that common and created nature, the absolute defectibility of which remained in the Blessed Virgin herself.

OBJECTION II

Whatever bears the character of an imperfection and of a connection with sin, as does the habit of Penance, is not fitting to the perfection and dignity of the Blessed Virgin.

REPLY

Although the habit of Penance implies a relation to sin as its material object, it is not thereby defiled in its formal character, for it is a virtue or good habit. Nor is it defiled in its formal object, which is precisely the destruction of evil or sin, as was said in Article XII (reply to Objection XII, p. 319). Neither does it necessarily presuppose its subject to have been defiled by sin; it presupposes only at least a remote and absolute capacity for sinning, which is an essential and inseparable imperfection of every created suppositum.

THE VIRTUE OF PENANCE CANNOT EXIST IN AN ANGEL, EVEN IN THE WAYFARING STATE

For an angel does not have the capacity to make amends or return from sin, by reason of the inflexibility of free choice with which he chooses his ultimate end irrevocably: once turned away from God, he cannot turn back, just as, once converted to God, he cannot turn away. Nevertheless, in demons, as also in damned human beings, and indeed in sinners during their earthly life, there can be a detestation of committed sin insofar as it is a source of evil; but this detestation is an act and a passion, not a habit and virtue.

St. Thomas addresses this in his *Commentary on the Sentences*, IV, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 3, qu. 4: "That the sin of an angel is irremissible has been said in Book II [dist. 7, q. 1, a. 2]. And because sin, considered as remissible or expiable, is the proper matter of that virtue which is called Penance, this matter cannot belong to them; for they do not have the power of passing into act in respect of it. Therefore the habit is not fitting to them; and hence the angels cannot be capable of receiving the virtue of Penance." In the same place: "Detestation of evil belongs to someone insofar as he has a natural ordering toward the good. And since in no creature is such an inclination entirely removed, therefore even in the damned this detestation remains, and consequently a passion of repentance, or something similar to it; hence it is said in Wisdom 5:3, 'Groaning within themselves, and repenting.' Yet this repentance, since it is not a habit but a passion or an act, can in no way exist in the blessed angels, in whom no committed sins have preceded. It does exist, however, in the evil angels, since the same account applies to them as to the souls of the damned; for according to Damascene, *On the Orthodox Faith*, Book II, chapter 4, 'what death is to man, the fall is to angels.'"

THE BLESSED RETAIN THE VIRTUE OF PENANCE

This is so both because the absolute possibility of sinning is not taken away from them by the beatific vision, and because in their earthly life they had, with the exception of the Blessed Virgin, at least the power of sinning, indeed even actual sin, at least venial sin (except for children who died before the use of reason). Moreover, even now in their heavenly homeland, although they cannot elicit the formal and principal act of Penance, namely sorrow itself—which is incompatible with beatitude—they can elicit an act of Penance, namely thanksgiving for the mercy of God who forgave the offenses of which they repented in life, and an act of detestation of their past sins.

St. Thomas explains this in his *Commentary on the Sentences*, IV, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 3, qu. 3: "The cardinal virtues will remain in heaven, but according to the acts which they have in their end, as was said in Book III [dist. 33, q. 1, a. 6]. And therefore, since Penance is a virtue and a part of justice, which is a cardinal habit, whoever has the habit of Penance in this life will have it in the life to come; but he will not have the same act that he has now, but another, namely to give thanks to God for His mercy in remitting sins." In the same place, reply to objection 3: "Penance properly speaking, insofar as it names the act of Penance which exists now, will not exist in our heavenly homeland; nevertheless the habit will not be in vain, because it will have another act." In the same work, IV, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 3, qu. 4, reply to objection 4: "The account of the holy angels and of holy souls is not the same, because in holy souls remissible sin has preceded, or could have preceded, but not in the angels. And so, although they are alike in respect of their present state, they are not alike in respect of their preceding state, which Penance directly regards." In the *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 84, a. 8: "[Penance involves displeasure.] Displeasure, however, causes sorrow in one who is capable of sorrow, as man is in this life; but after this life the saints are not capable of sorrow. Therefore their past sins will displease them without any sadness, according to Isaiah 65:16: 'The former distresses are given over

to forgetfulness.'" In the *Supplement*, q. 4, a. 3, body and reply to objection 1: "Souls ... after this life, when they are in their heavenly homeland, cannot have contrition because they lack sorrow owing to the fullness of joy. ... Charity does not cause ... sorrow except in those who are capable of sorrow; but the fullness of joy in the blessed excludes every capacity for sorrow. And therefore, although they have charity, they lack contrition."

THE VIRTUE OF PENANCE EXISTED IN ADAM IN THE STATE OF ORIGINAL JUSTICE

Not according to its act, since he had committed no sin, but according to its habit, since he possessed the power of sinning—and not merely an absolute power, as did the Blessed Virgin, since he had not been confirmed in grace.

St. Thomas speaks to this in the *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 95, a. 3: "If ... an imperfection belonging to the account of a virtue is incompatible with the perfection of the original state, such a virtue could exist there according to the habit, but not according to the act; as is evident concerning Penance, which is sorrow for a sin committed, and mercy, which is sorrow for another's misery. But sorrow, guilt, and misery are incompatible with the perfection of the original state. Hence virtues of this kind existed in the first man according to their habits, but not according to their acts. For the first man was so disposed that, had sin preceded, he would have grieved over it; and likewise, if he had seen misery in another, he would have relieved it as far as he could. As the Philosopher says [*Ethics*, IV, final chapter, at the end], shame, which concerns a shameful deed, befits the studious man only conditionally: for he is so disposed that he would be ashamed if he committed something shameful."

THE VIRTUE OF PENANCE EXISTS IN INFANTS RECENTLY BAPTIZED

It is infused together with the other virtues and sanctifying grace, for there remains in them the power of sinning. An act of Penance, however, is absent until, upon attaining the use of reason, they commit a sin. Such an act proceeds from the very same habit infused in Baptism, if it concerns a venial sin; but it proceeds from a new habit infused at a second justification, if it concerns a mortal sin, because by the first mortal sin the habit infused in Baptism is lost.

St. Thomas says in his *Commentary on the Sentences*, IV, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 3, qu. 2: "The habit is intermediate between potency and act. And since, when what is prior is removed, what is posterior is removed, but not conversely, when the potency for an act is removed, the habit is removed, though the potency is not removed when the habit is removed. And since the withdrawal of the matter takes away the act, because an act cannot exist without the matter in which it is exercised, it follows that the habit of a virtue belongs to someone in whom the matter is not present, provided it can be present; and thus it cannot issue into act. For example, a poor man can have the habit of magnificence, but not its act, because he does not possess great riches, which are the matter of magnificence, although he may possess them. And therefore, although innocents in the state of innocence do not have committed sins, which are the matter of Penance, yet they may have them; the act of Penance cannot be in them, but the habit can. And this is infused into them, if they have grace, together with all the virtues." In the same place, reply to objection 1: "Although [infants] have not committed sin, they can nevertheless commit it; and so it is fitting that they have the habit of Penance. Yet that habit can never issue into act except perhaps in respect of venial sins, because mortal sins destroy that habit itself. Nevertheless, it is not useless, because it is a perfection of the natural potency."

THE HABIT OF PENANCE IS GIVEN TO SOULS IN PURGATORY

They do not, however, possess the act of contrition properly so called, because the sorrow they experience concerning their sins is no longer satisfactory, since they are outside the state of meriting and making satisfaction.

St. Thomas explains this in the *Supplement*, q. 4, a. 3, body and reply to objection 2: "Those [souls] who are in Purgatory have sorrow for their sins informed by grace, but not meritorious sorrow, because they are not in the state of meriting. In this life, however, all three of the aforesaid [conditions] can be found." "The souls in Purgatory grieve over their sins; yet that sorrow is not contrition, because contrition must be efficacious." Compare below, Article LXII (Chapter VI, On Satisfaction).

THE HABIT OF PENANCE CANNOT BE GIVEN TO THE DAMNED IN HELL

For they are fixed in aversion from God. Nevertheless, this does not contradict the principle established in the present conclusion, that every mere human being is a subject of Penance. The fact that damned human beings cannot amend their ways does not arise, as it does in angels, from an intrinsic inflexibility of free choice, but solely from the condition of damnation which they themselves have chosen.

Article 16. Whether the virtue of Penance is essentially supernatural and infused of itself, and whether, in addition to it, a natural and acquired virtue of Penance properly so called is admitted

ARTICLE XVI

Whether the Virtue of Penance Is Essentially Supernatural and Infused of Itself, and Whether, Besides It, There Is Another Properly So-Called Natural and Acquired Virtue of Penance (*Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 84, a. 7, body and reply to objection 1; q. 85, a. 5; I–II, q. 109, aa. 6 and 7).[212]

[212] Cf. Commentary on the Sentences, IV, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, qu. 3, reply to objection 4; dist. 22, q. 2, a. 3, qu. 1, replies to objections 1 and 2; q. 51, aa. 2 and 4; q. 63, aa. 2 and 3; q. 113, aa. 6 and 8; Disputed Questions on the Virtues in General, aa. 1 and 9.

STATE OF THE QUESTION

From the question of the essence we pass to the question *of the principle of Penance*, which is reduced to its efficient cause. In the present article the principle of the habit of Penance is principally considered; in the following article, however, the principle of its act.

These questions also pertain to the essence of Penance, or to its supernatural character. The question *of the supernatural character of Penance* coincides with the question whether it is a virtue *infused of itself*, since only supernatural virtues require God Himself to infuse them into man. For even in angels the natural virtues are infused of themselves; and their nature requires this, because unlike man an angel does not acquire the perfection of his intellect and will gradually and from outward sensible things.

Four Questions Are Considered Here

The third and fourth are explicitly proposed in the title of the article: 1. Whether repentance belongs to natural right, or is within the powers of natural reason and appetite, even antecedently to or apart

from the illumination of faith and revelation; so that, whether in pure nature or in elevated nature, man can know from reason alone that he must repent in some manner and can in some manner repent by his natural will. 2. Whether, by merely natural powers or without the help of supernatural grace, man can elicit an absolute and efficacious act of Penance—not indeed one that is salvific or leads to justification (to assert that would be the Pelagian heresy), but considered only according to its substance: an efficacious sorrow, conceived from love or fear of God, tending toward amendment of sin and including an absolute purpose not to sin thereafter. 3. Whether Penance is a supernatural and infused virtue, not merely a natural or acquired one. 4. Whether, in addition to supernatural and infused Penance, there is nevertheless another natural and acquired virtue of Penance, so that natural repentance, whether in a sinner or even in a just man, can in some way attain the character of a virtue properly so called, even according to the imperfect state of a disposition.

NEGATIVE AND AFFIRMATIVE POSITIONS

On the First Question: Whether There Is Any Natural Repentance

As regards the first question, namely, whether there is any natural repentance, CAJETAN disagrees with the affirmative and common opinion of both Thomists and other theologians, in his commentary on St. Thomas (III, q. 84, a. 7, reply to objection 1). He denies that, without the illumination of faith, human reason possesses sufficient knowledge of the amendment of sin through sorrow, or a sufficient motive by which a man might be convinced that he ought to repent of sin. Scotus (*Commentary on the Sentences*, IV, dist. 14, q. 3) and Durandus (ibid., dist. 14, q. 1) preceded Cajetan in this position.

CAJETAN ON THE NATURAL LAW OF REPENTANCE

Cajetan says: "Concerning the assertion [of St. Thomas in III, q. 84, a. 7, reply to objection 1] that repentance belongs to natural law as regards sorrow, the remedy of sorrow, and some sign of sorrow, observe that these words may be understood in two ways. First, simply and absolutely, as they sound. Understood thus, they present great difficulty, unless they are false. For, if a sin has not been scandalously manifest to others, no reason is apparent, from natural reason, for signs of sorrow. Again, apart from the teachings of faith, sorrow or sadness over a past sin seems in no way to possess the character of a remedy. Moreover, it seems superfluous to grieve over past evils. Add to this that it is difficult to know how man, relying solely on natural law, would have recognized that sin is abolished by anything other than ceasing to sin." "They are understood, however, in another way, *presupposing in man the knowledge of faith*: so that, once faith is presupposed, it follows not from faith but from natural reason that man should grieve over sins committed, should employ sorrow as a remedy, and should exhibit some sign of sorrow. Although this third point must be understood—as happens also with the external worship of religion—as being a matter of natural law in general. For the natural reason of a faithful man dictates that he grieve over an offense against his Creator; and, since there is no remedy available to us other than a 'contrite heart' [Psalm 50:19], he should seek this humiliation as a remedy for sorrow, that is, for the sin over which he must grieve."

On the Second Question: Whether an Efficacious Act of Penance Can Be Elicited without Grace

With regard to the second question—namely, whether without grace man can elicit an efficacious act of Penance, considered according to its substance —the negative and common opinion of the Thomists is opposed principally by LUDOVICUS MOLINA. Consistently with the principles of

Molinism, of which he himself became the founder, Molina teaches that man, by the powers of nature alone, or under the general concurrence of God alone, can elicit, in respect of the substance of the act alone, both attrition and absolute, efficacious contrition, that is, contrition including an absolute purpose of sinning no more. He nevertheless teaches something different concerning the acts of faith, hope, and love connected with the act of Penance: their supernatural character he attributes to the additional assistance of grace, by which, while their substance remains unchanged, they are raised to the supernatural order.

MOLINA, IN THE *CONCORDIA*

In his *Concordia*, disputation 14, member 1, he asks: "Whether free choice, with the general concurrence alone, can elicit attrition and contrition as regards the substance of the act." He answers: "It is not to be denied, but must rather be acknowledged, in accordance with the scholastic doctors' common opinion, that our free choice, with the general concurrence of God alone, can elicit not only natural attrition, that is, sorrow for sins arising from fear of God, with a purpose of sinning no more mortally, but also natural contrition, which likewise includes a purpose of sinning no more." (Paris, 1876, p. 60.) At the conclusion of the same discussion Molina explains: "The reason supporting the common opinion of the doctors is this: when the light of faith has first been present, by which we acknowledge God to be our founder, possessed of the highest and greatest beneficence both of nature and of grace, which He has bestowed upon us even to the shedding of His own blood upon the Cross; by which we acknowledge the everlasting happiness of the just, and likewise the everlasting misery of the wicked; when we consider how great an evil mortal sin is, that it offends the divine majesty, and that only one such sin suffices to exclude a man from eternal happiness and to cast him into the utmost misery unless, with the grace of God, he grieve over it—this thought is undoubtedly so powerful for arousing and moving the will that free choice, having been persuaded by it and grasping it as its own, may, without any further suggestion or exhortation, with the general concurrence of God alone, elicit, in view of the external evils into which he would otherwise fall, sorrow or detestation of his sins, even with the purpose of avoiding thereafter all mortal sins, which constitutes attrition in respect of the substance of the act; and, in view of the goodness and beneficence of God, likewise elicit detestation with a purpose not to sin, in which the nature of contrition is placed, as regards the substance of the act, though insufficient for salvation; that it is not aroused or effected by the special impulse of the Holy Spirit." (Ibid., p. 63.)

In member 4 Molina continues: "We can confirm the common opinion of the scholastic doctors ..." "First, because, in the absence at least of the obstacles of those who are in sin, it is not very difficult for anyone presented with such an occasion to elicit, as regards the substance of the act alone, an absolute purpose of not sinning mortally henceforth, which is sufficient for contrition and attrition. Indeed, if the light of faith is set before the eyes of his mind, and he persuades himself that—" "—he must be excluded from eternal beatitude, and, if he does not determine henceforth not to sin mortally, must be tormented by everlasting fire amid countless other circumstantial evils, it is easily within his free choice, with the general concurrence of God alone, to elicit an absolute purpose of sinning no more mortally, so as to escape such great evil. For to any nature, when two hardships are presented, the lesser of the two may be chosen, even if it is a positive hardship, rather than endure the greater." "Second, because a purpose of this kind lies outside the whole range of grace, since it is not in the least conducive to a supernatural end, and is a *merely natural act*, proper to free choice itself.

Since the natural intellect and moral and natural philosophy teach that this is not beyond the natural powers of human free choice, with God cooperating only as a universal cause through the *general concurrence alone*, in the manner in which He cooperates with the causes of other things, he who denies it undertakes to prove the contrary: namely, that it cannot be done by human powers. Nor does it appear what advantage would follow from it, why natural powers of human free choice should therefore be extended to similar, simple, natural acts, and yet this one and the like should be denied without the special assistance of God." (Ibid., p. 73.)

Molina is nevertheless aware that this opinion—which he seems elsewhere expressly to propose as "dangerous, indeed bordering on error" (*ibid.*, member 2, p. 63), and the opposite of the opinion "asserted today in the schools by various orders and provinces" (*ibid.*, member 4, p. 74)—is controversial; and so he postpones the final decision until disputation 19, member 6. There, although he still inclines strongly to the affirmative position, he states hesitantly that one should not depart from the common opinion. He writes: "Although it is clear from what has been said thus far that the later opinion lacks neither probability of its own nor the authority of the Fathers whom we have cited for its affirmation, nevertheless the earlier opinion, because of the arguments by which we have confirmed it, should rather be regarded as ancient and common in the schools of various provinces; indeed it is judged that the ancient Fathers and Councils assert that the powers of fallen nature, without the special help of God, are unequal even to the overcoming of some moderately difficult or more vehement temptation at one time, or to the eliciting of any natural act morally good, however difficult, and therefore that they cannot elicit even attrition in respect of the substance of the act alone, without the special help of God. The great weakness remaining in our free choice after the sin of our first parents is certainly great, as no one doubts. Therefore, until the Church determines otherwise, or the earlier opinion ceases to be common in the schools, we believe that much weight should be attached to the opinion affirmed by so many learned men, and to the arguments by which it is confirmed, and that it is not easy to establish a number of things that may render it certain and efficacious. For that reason we have preferred that both this and disputation XIV, whose decision we have deferred to a later time, should be proposed rather than asserted by us. We have disclosed them in a modest spirit, so that it might be understood how much probability there is in their opinions. Nor ought we to keep silent about what has occurred to us concerning the matter, if perhaps it may be discussed by others in time." (Ibid., p. 109.)

Nevertheless, it is clear from Molina's own additional words at the end of the same member 6, disputation 19, that for him this decision is merely voluntary and prudential. He writes in the Antwerp edition of 1595:

"Perhaps the prudent reader will wonder—and many, having read the first edition of our work and having sent letters to us, have wondered—what reason there could be that, when with firm arguments we have refuted the common opinions of most eminent doctors in disputation XIV, upon which we have so obscurely propped up both questions, we have, contrary to the arguments of others, so clearly resolved and overturned them, and should have preferred to define both questions at the end in this manner, contrary indeed to our custom, with our solutions having been sought out and employed through rational inquiry; but these solutions, unlike those of others, we have never been able to explain fully. We did this, however, in order to serve the disposition of certain minds, which are sometimes to be indulged with patience. For neither at that time did the Lord consider

something else expedient by reason of the times, nor does obedience seem to call for it on my part; yet I should easily be able, by the passages read in either part, to demonstrate what is true, whatever our judgment concerning the matter may be." (Ibid., p. 112 ff.)

MOLINA ON ACTS OF FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE

Concerning acts of faith, hope, and love, Molina teaches the following: Disputation 7: "The question under discussion, then, is whether, once the things to be believed and the arguments put forward for them are present, which of themselves persuade the mind that they are revealed by God and must rightly be believed, and finally, when an external calling to faith through preachers and other ministers of the Church is added, our free choice, with the general concurrence of God alone, can in fact assent to the propositions as divinely revealed, by an act which is merely natural. Likewise, whether an internal calling of the mind, an illumination, and an attraction through supernatural help are necessary for assenting to the things belonging to faith, so that not only a supernatural act, which is needed for justification on the part of the intellect, is necessary, but we cannot even give assent to them by an act assumed to be merely natural. The affirmative side of the proposed question has always appeared true to me." (Ibid., p. 30 ff.)

Disputation 13: "Concerning hope, as regards the substance of the act, it will not be necessary, after what has been said about faith, to prolong the discussion. Anyone will readily concede that, where an assent of the intellect concerning revealed things is already present, free choice, with the general concurrence of God alone, can elicit an act, indeed not a supernatural one, nor one necessary for salvation, but a merely natural *hope in God*, namely concerning the things that have been revealed and promised to us by Him, and thus one which may be called hope—not Christian hope, but hope as regards the substance of the act. There is no difficulty in that act, nor indeed in the act of assenting to revealed truths. For when the act by which we assent that the things promised to us are true is already present, we may the more readily elicit a true act of hoping for them by our own powers, especially when we have persuaded ourselves that these and other things are true. ... Add that Jews and heretics likewise hope in God for what we hope for; for no one can say that they either love God or are helped by Him to hope. But true love of God cannot be separated from contrition, as we have said, for contrition includes it." (Ibid., p. 59 ff.; cf. disputation 14, p. 76.)

Disputation 14, member 5: "[The Councils of Trent, session VI, canons 1 and 3, imply] that we can indeed believe, hope, love, and repent in respect of the substance of the act without the special help of God, but not as is fitting for attaining the grace of justification." (Ibid., p. 77.)

Disputation 37: "It is certain that our free choice and prevenient grace are two parts of one integral cause of the act of believing, hoping, or repenting, as is necessary for salvation; and that the individual acts of this kind depend as much upon the influence of free choice as upon the influence of prevenient grace. Free choice, however, has it of itself that it can elicit these acts according to their substance, namely believing, hoping, or repenting; whereas from the influence of prevenient grace it has it that they are supernatural and of the kind necessary for salvation." (Ibid., p. 209; cf. what he says in disputation 45.)

In support of this position Molina cites Soto, Cano, Cajetan, Scotus, Biel, Ockham, d'Ailly, Paludanus, Richard, Vega, Victoria, Bonaventure, and St. Thomas (whose texts he arbitrarily comments on for a whole page).[213]He adds: "I do not remember having read anyone thus far among

the earlier doctors Soto and Cano who opposed this common opinion." (Ibid., pp. 60–62.) Indeed, he reproaches and rebukes some of the earlier doctors as though they had gone so far as to say that "sorrow elicited by natural powers alone suffices as a disposition for the infusion of grace." (Ibid., p. 63.)

[213] Cf. below, at the end of Conclusion II, pp. 425 ff. [Reference in the original edition.]

Although Molina rather confidently invokes the authority of so many and such great theologians, some of whom speak ambiguously, and others—such as St. Thomas—oppose his teaching, it cannot be denied that certain theologians favor him, especially Scotus (*Commentary on the Sentences*, IV, dist. 14, q. 2, a. 1), Durandus (ibid., II, dist. 28, q. 5), Biel (ibid., III, dist. 27, q. 1), and Cajetan.[214]These are the very doctors whom the Protestants, with Chemnitz,[215]accuse of having taught that the act of Penance is merely natural.

[214] Their teaching is expounded and refuted by Suárez (disp. 3, sect. 6), although he does not mention Molina. The Salmanticenses (disp. 4, dub. 3), however, direct their entire attack toward explaining and overthrowing Molina's position.

[215] *Examen Concilii Tridentini*, part 2, *De Paenitentia*, Frankfurt, 1598, pp. 964 ff.

Cajetan's Own Teaching

The teaching of CAJETAN himself is far from clear. For in one place, namely in the first question of the *Questions on Contrition*, he seems plainly to hold the same opinion as Molina. In another place, namely in I–II, q. 109, a. 4, he seems to advance the same opinion, but with less clarity. In a third place, however, namely in II–II, q. 6, a. 1, he appears to some[216]to retract the earlier opinion. Yet he himself does not say that he is retracting the earlier position; nor does this follow from his words. Rather, in explaining the preceding passage more clearly, he distinguishes the act of believing from faith as faith, and the act of believing that comes from the virtue of faith, whether unformed or formed by charity; he teaches that both the first and the second are essentially supernatural. How all these passages agree with one another in Cajetan's mind, especially if the first passage is considered, is not readily apparent.

[216] As Del Prado, O.P., *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*, part 1, Fribourg, 1907, pp. 50–52 and note.

Here are his words:

CAJETAN, QUESTIONS ON CONTRITION

Questions on Contrition, first question, nn. 3, 5, 6: "One kind [of contrition] is within our power, and we can be certain of it; the other proceeds from divine grace, and is uncertain to us. The first of these consists, above all, in loving God above all things; the second consists in loving God after the manner of charity, 'poured forth by the Holy Spirit in our hearts' [Rom. 5:5]. And if the first were lacking, namely the love of God above all things, there would be no contrition; but if the first is present, contrition is called forth. That this love is within our power is apparent from the fact that, just as it is within our power to set before ourselves as our last end a venerable or lucrative pleasure or a kingdom, so it is within our power to—" "—have God, even as the blessed have beatitude, as our last end, so that we may intend and deliberately prefer Him Himself in our will to all things that can be desired. And that a love of this kind is also required for contrition, and is distinguished from attrition, is evident from the fact that without such love there can be no forming of [contrition by] charity. *For an acquired love of this kind underlies the formation of charity. ...*" "It is the gratuitous motion of

God which makes acquired contrition of this kind the final disposition to His own charity. Thus, by the very fact that God, not through any superadded habitual gift, but through His gratuitous love, deigns to use our acquired contrition as the final disposition to His own work, which is the charity that is infused, our contrition is transferred into the status of a final disposition for habitual grace. ..." "[Moreover, this same acquired contrition is taken up by charity and made both formed and meritorious; for] what is attributed to the diversity of natural principles is attributed also to diversity of principles in the order of meritorious action. This does not entail that one and the same act cannot exist both without such a principle and with it. For one and the same exterior act, which was not morally good by reason of its principle, can become morally good as it proceeds. Likewise, in the matter at hand, acquired contrition, which is not meritorious by reason of its principle, may become meritorious in its continuation when charity supervenes. *Nor is it necessary to begin afresh the act as regards the substance of the act*, but it suffices that the act, so far as it is meritorious, should begin afresh. For when an act is said to begin from charity, as a meritorious act, the expression is formal: that is, it is said not of the act simply, but inasmuch as it is meritorious. Hence an act may simply have begun without merit and charity, and the same act may continue with merit and begin from charity according to its being meritorious." (Leonine edition of the works of St. Thomas, vol. 12, pp. 343 ff.)

CAJETAN, ON I–II, QUESTION 109

On I–II, q. 109, a. 4, n. 6: "The reply given to the third objection in the letter extends to all the precepts of the theological virtues: so that even to believe, hope, love God, and confess Jesus Christ Himself, a man can, through his natural powers, so far as the substance of the works is concerned, fulfill them, though not so far as the act is performed under the impulse of hope, faith, and charity. If this is true, we may consequently conclude that an unbeliever instructed in the faith, yet unwilling to be a Christian, could believe the whole faith to be true, as the Church holds it; for it is certain that such a man would believe without the aid of any supernatural grace. He could likewise hope to be blessed in heaven, though his hope would be empty, as would his faith. As to a purpose sufficiently disposing one to the substance of the works, this is evident in the case of heretics with regard to outward confession and interior acts and the reception—" "—of the sacraments; for experience teaches that they exercise acts of faith, hope, and charity, so far as the substance of the works is concerned, inwardly and outwardly, without any supernatural gift in them."

CAJETAN, ON II–II, QUESTION 6

On II–II, q. 6, a. 1, nn. 1–3: "In the body of the article a doubt arises whether assenting to those things that belong to faith elevates man above his nature. For if these things are so, ... the teaching set forth above in the preceding book [I–II, q. 109, a. 4, n. 6] falls. ... Here [in the letter of St. Thomas] the question is of faith simply, and not of faith as virtue simply, or as formed or unformed. For faith is faith simply, and perfect faith simply, by the perfection of faith, not by the perfection of virtue; and this because what faith is, considered apart from being formed or not formed by charity, ... Therefore, by saying that the act of faith—namely assenting to the first truth according to the Scriptures and the mind of the Church—elevates man above his nature, and that this one who denies the proper [object] is ignorant of the meaning, he holds that this act cannot follow upon any natural knowledge or any natural appetite, but upon an appetite for eternal beatitude and a supernatural adherence to God revealing Himself and preserving His Church."

On the Third Question: Whether the Virtue of Penance Is Supernatural and Infused

As regards the third question—namely, whether Penance is a supernatural and infused virtue—the theologians commonly answer affirmatively. A few, however, especially in the Scotist school, deny this: namely, Scotus (*Commentary on the Sentences*, IV, dist. 14, q. 2), Durandus (on the same distinction, q. 2), Henno (disp. 1, conclusion 2), Christophorus Delgadillo (*De Poenitentia*, ch. 2, dub. 14), and Ripalda (*De ente supernaturali*, vol. I, book III, disp. 53). Applying to the virtue of Penance their general principle that there is no infused virtue besides the theological virtues, they teach that, through repeated acts of repentance brought forth by natural reason under the influence, it is true, of faith and the other theological virtues, the habit of Penance is acquired naturally, without its having to be infused by God.[217]

[217] Cajetan reports and refutes Scotus and Durandus in his commentary on q. 85, a. 6.

Several earlier authors judged this position severely. Thus John of St. Thomas says that, although the position denying the infusion of other moral virtues together with the theological virtues cannot be condemned as certainly deserving of censure, "nevertheless, concerning one moral virtue, namely Penance, I believe that its being infused follows so closely from the teaching of the Council that one cannot deny without censure that it is an infused virtue; and so I think it is at least proximate to error [understand: proximate to heresy or error in faith] to deny that the virtue of Penance is infused" (on I–II, q. 62, disp. 16, a. 7, n. 9).

We judge more moderately that the opinion must be censured as possessing a certain *note of temerity*, not because it directly teaches that Penance is not an infused virtue—for the Council does not teach that Penance is a virtue or a habit in the strict sense, although the Catechism of the Council of Trent does teach it, together with the common chorus of theologians (cf. above, art. 12, p. 279)—but insofar as it denies that Penance is anything infused and, as follows, even denies that an act of Penance conducive to salvation is intrinsically supernatural. Both of these, and especially the latter, conflict with the mind of the Council, as will be shown in Conclusion III.

On the Fourth Question: Whether There Is Also an Acquired Virtue of Penance

Concerning the fourth question—namely, whether there is a natural and acquired virtue of Penance in addition to supernatural Penance—those who discuss or touch upon it commonly answer negatively among the Thomists and many others, such as Soto, Cano, Gregory of Valencia (disp. 7, q. 2), John of St. Thomas, and the Salmanticenses (disp. 5, dub. 5, § 3, n. 200 ff.); among modern authors, De Augustinis (*De Poenitentia*, thesis 1) and Prümmer (n. 307). Many others answer affirmatively, including certain earlier writers, such as Richard (*In IV Sent.*, dist. 14, a. 4), Lugo[218]and Gonet, and, among modern writers, Pesch,[219]E. Amann,[220]and Galtier. The last-named, after briefly presenting the principal argument adduced by these doctors—namely, why two virtues of Penance must be distinguished, one infused and the other acquired—writes: "Does the opinion then suppose ... that, given the infused habit [of Penance], there is also acquired a natural habit which makes the act easier, and which remains even after a sin by which the infused habit is lost? The same view is indeed accepted concerning Penance as concerning the other moral virtues. By an acquired habit the greater promptness for repentance is more easily explained, whether in the just man who has long struggled against sin, or in the sinner who, whenever he falls, immediately fosters detestation of sin."[221]

[218] Disp. 3, sect. 2, nn. 24, 27; compare his opinion on Penance concerning the sins of others, presented above in art. 14, pp. 363 ff.

[219] N. 98, where, however, he speaks doubtfully or hypothetically.

[220] In *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, article "Pénitence," col. 747.

[221] *De Paenitentia*, thesis 2, n. 34, Paris, 1931, p. 25.

Gonet writes: "You infer ... that, besides the habit of supernatural Penance, there exists a habit of natural Penance. For it is naturally known that sin is contrary to reason and thereby to the first rule of the eternal law, participation in which is natural reason; therefore the will can, by its own powers, detest sin as contrary to reason and eternal law, nor does this exceed its powers. Hence acts of this kind can give rise to a habit making the will more ready to elicit similar acts. It follows that in the state of pure nature a true habit of natural Penance could have existed, since in that state a man could often grieve over sins against God, the author of nature, and seek forgiveness of them; for many among the Gentiles, destitute of the light of faith, taught that, by the dictate of natural reason alone, sacrifices should formerly be offered to God to appease Him for sins, as Plato writes in book X of the *Laws*. Thus Ovid, in book I of the *Epistulae ex Ponto*, says of his gods: 'Often they lighten punishments and restore the light they have taken away, when they see that a man has duly repented of his sin.'"[222]

[222] *De Paenitentia*, disp. 2, a. 3, § 6, n. 93, *Clypeus*, vol. 6, Paris, 1876, p. 538.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion I. Some Repentance Is Possible by the Natural Powers of Reason and Will

Conclusion I. To repent belongs to the order and right of natural reason and natural appetite, even before, or apart from, the illumination of faith and revelation. Thus a man, whether in the state of pure nature or in the state of elevated nature, can know from reason alone that he ought to repent in some way and can, by the natural will, in some way repent (III, q. 84, a. 7, body and reply to objection 1; *In IV Sent.*, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, q. 3, replies 3 and 4; dist. 22, q. 2, a. 3, q. 1, replies 1 and 2).

Proof.

By natural reason itself, without illumination by the light of faith, a man can distinguish, first, between what is morally good and what is morally evil, that is, what conforms to right reason and what is contrary to it; second, he can recognize that good is to be done and evil avoided; third, he can recognize that something is an evil against God, since he can naturally know that God exists, that He is to be worshiped, and that a definite action involves some disharmony with the worship due to God —for example, by way of disobedience or irreligion—and thus is in some way an injury to, or violation of, the divine right; fourth, he can consequently infer that an injury against God, as an evil, is to be shunned and, as an injury, to be repaired, both by detestation, which is flight from evil, and by sorrow, which is a certain reparation for the complacency entertained in the act of sin.

Since a man is able to recognize this by reason, he is also able to desire it by his will and endeavor to carry it out.

Therefore to repent, or to tend toward the reparation of a divine right violated by sin, belongs to the order and right of nature,[223]although in fact a man cannot by the powers of nature alone and without the help of grace elicit an efficacious act of contrition or attrition, as will be stated in the following conclusion. Rather, he can issue some endeavor and an imperfect act in the proper line of Penance

(that is, imperfect attrition), and therefore natural repentance cannot be a virtue properly so called, but only a certain movement of the will of the kind of praiseworthy acts, which fall below the genus of virtue, as will be stated in Conclusion IV.

[223] Suárez develops this argument well (disp. 3, sect. 7), although he also unsuccessfully attempts to prove the same conclusion in another way, namely from the possibility of loving God above all things by the powers of nature alone, to which corresponds the possibility of sorrowing over an evil against God, or over sin. For the alleged possibility of loving God above all things, even merely affectively and for a brief time, must be denied; moreover, if it were granted, it would follow that not merely any act of Penance, but an efficacious one, could be elicited (cf. below, Conclusion IV), which Suárez himself rightly denies (ibid., n. 4).

This is confirmed by the fact that such a movement of repentance, referred to the divinity itself, was not hidden from the pagans. This is evident both from the various expiatory sacrifices employed in their religions, as history and Plato testify (*Laws*, X), and from certain testimonies of pagan writers, such as Ovid and Ausonius (cited above, p. 9 ff.).

Lactantius certainly assumes that repentance was not unknown to the pagans when he corrects Cicero, who doubted whether repentance is efficacious for amending one's life, in these words: "If, when we see our children repent of their offenses, we consider them corrected, and nevertheless receive again, encourage, and embrace those whom we had cast off and disowned, why do we despair of being able to appease the clemency of God our Father by repenting?" (*Divine Institutes*, VI, 24; PL 6, 722). The same Father, in praise of Seneca's remarkable saying, writes: "'The exhortations of Seneca,' he says, 'end with an admirable sentiment: "Great, I know not what, and greater than can be conceived, is the divinity to which we devote ourselves while we live. Let us prove ourselves worthy of Him. For it avails nothing that conscience be enclosed: we stand open before God." ... Concerning sacrifice itself he says a few words. "Ivory," says Plato, "is not a chaste gift to God." What then? Painted and woven treasures? ... How much better and more truly does Seneca say: "Do you wish to conceive God as great and gracious, and to see His mild majesty as a friend, and ever at hand? He is not to be worshiped by sacrifices and much blood (for what pleasure is there in the slaughter of the innocent?), but with a pure mind and with a good and honest purpose. Temples for Him are not to be built from stones piled high: He is to be consecrated in each man's own breast."'" (Ibid., VI, 24 ff.; PL 6, 724–729.)

Augustine therefore did not speak either extravagantly or with too much emphasis when he declared that Penance is "the voice of nature," and that not even "any barbarism" has been ignorant of it (cf. above, art. 11, p. 271).

St. Thomas, III, q. 84, a. 7, says pertinently: "The matter of this sacrament pre-existed in nature (for man is moved by natural reason to repent of the evils he has committed); but that a man perform Penance in this or that manner comes from divine institution." (Reply to objection 1; cited above in art. 2, pp. 146 ff.) In *IV Sentences*, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, q. 3, reply to objection 4: "This virtue is reduced to one of the cardinal virtues, as has been said. Yet the philosophers made no mention of this virtue, because the remission of sin, whether by expiation or by God's providence in human acts, insofar as guilt is offended and Penance appeases God, belongs to the providence of God. The philosophers, however, did not consider the virtues directing human acts as ordered to divine providence, but as ordered to the human good; consequently they made no mention of Penance. Nevertheless, from the likeness of other virtues which they defined, we can understand it also. For just as there is a virtue by

which a man pleases one whom he has offended by sinning against him, so also there is a virtue by which a man pleases God, whom he has offended by sinning against Him."[224]

[224] Variant reading: "Guilt is shown, and repentance is lamented." [The printed Latin note reads: *Aliter: Culpa ostenditur, et poenitentia ploratur*.]

Ibid., dist. 22, q. 2, a. 3, q. 1, reply to objection 2 (cited above in art. 2, p. 146). From these passages it is clear that Cajetan did not correctly explain St. Thomas's mind when he taught that Penance belongs to natural right not absolutely, but only under the illumination of faith. For from the very text of q. 84, a. 7, reply to objection 1, it is manifest that the Holy Doctor speaks of natural right taken *absolutely*. After alluding to the repentance of the Ninevites, he adds: "Yet in them there was something added from faith, which they conceived through the preaching of Jonah, namely, that they should act thus in the hope of obtaining pardon from God."

The three reasons alleged by Cajetan for the negative position do not overturn this conclusion.

First, even a sin that is not scandalous but merely private or interior possesses the character of moral deformity and therefore can, as such, be detested and become the object of Penance, although it cannot be the object of shame. Second, that imperfect sorrow which is possible in the order of nature affords some remedy for sin, although an incomplete one, because it establishes in the will a certain effort to destroy sin. Third, by the light of reason alone man can recognize that sin is to be removed not merely by ceasing to sin, but also by sorrow of soul, as is evident from the pagan descriptions of Penance (cf. Gellius and Ovid, cited above, pp. 6 and 9). Indeed, he can in some manner recognize the remissibility of sin through God's mercy, as was stated above in the Confirmation.

Nor does it matter that those who are uneducated and weaker may fail explicitly to discover these reasons for repentance, since it is enough that certain wiser persons should set them before themselves, and that they therefore be able to follow them by the light of reason alone. Moreover, a certain confused and implicit knowledge of them seems, as it were, innate and necessary to the human intellect, since it follows closely from the first principles of reason, as does the very knowledge of the morality of human acts, and of the existence and rights of God, upon which natural Penance is immediately founded, as was shown in the proof of this conclusion.

We readily grant, moreover, that through the illumination of faith the act of natural repentance becomes clearer, more determinate, more prompt, easier, and more common, especially when the state of sanctifying grace is presupposed, by which the sinner's natural inability to love God above all things as a natural end is removed. Nevertheless, the inability to elicit an efficacious natural act of attrition or contrition by the powers of nature alone is not thereby removed, as will be stated against Cajetan in the following conclusion.

We further add that, once the illumination of faith is presupposed, *natural reason itself indirectly dictates supernatural repentance*, inasmuch as, recognizing that the same God is offended in the order of nature and that He is the God presented by faith, when it dictates repentance for sin it thereby dictates that this same God should be appeased in every way in which He has been offended, and so also in the supernatural manner and order. In the same way, natural reason, which directly dictates that God is to be worshiped, also indirectly dictates that God is to be adored in the Eucharist, once His presence in that sacrament has become known by faith.

Nor is it an obstacle that reason, according to its natural powers, cannot attain a supernatural object, since it cannot pass beyond the limits of its species. For the aforesaid attainment of the supernatural object is wholly *indirect*, and is exercised within the direct attainment of reason's own natural object. In such a case the light of faith does not assist reason on the part of the principle of its act—as the light of faith or of the beatific vision does in the act of knowledge proceeding from the powers of grace or from a supernatural principle—and we should thereby depart from the supposition under discussion (namely whether natural reason of its own powers, while the light of faith is present, dictates supernatural Penance itself). Faith assists only on the part of the object, and then indirectly, insofar as under its light certain objects or reasons are shown to the intellect which otherwise would remain unknown, and which are connected with reason's own natural object, or to which it extends itself indirectly and implicitly.

Thus, because reason dictates that God must be worshiped, it follows that reason also dictates He must be worshiped in the Eucharist, once the existence of this mystery is known through faith—not because faith offers to reason its own properly supernatural object, but because it occasions the extension or determination of reason's own object, which is that God is to be worshiped in whatever way He offers Himself to be known. Likewise, from the revelation of the beatific vision, which reason could never even suspect, the intellect has a new object which it can in some manner illustrate through its own powers under its formal object, extending its congruences and analogies and defining its possibility negatively through the resolution of contrary objections. Similarly, once supernatural precepts have been revealed, reason, by reason of the very natural love of God, dictates that those precepts too must be observed.

In the same manner, then, human reason, by intimating natural repentance directly, dictates supernatural repentance indirectly. Likewise, through the more certain knowledge conferred by faith concerning the necessity of repentance and the remissibility of sins through divine generosity, it becomes more certain and expeditious in its very act of natural Penance. This is analogous to the way that, from the knowledge of God's existence supplied by faith, the philosopher's scientific assent is very firmly strengthened, so as to banish all doubt without being raised thereby to a higher object.

Conclusion II. An Efficacious Act of Penance Requires Supernatural Grace

Conclusion II. Fallen man, at least in the present state of elevated nature, cannot by his own powers and without the supernatural help of grace elicit an efficacious act of Penance as regards its substance —that is, an act of contrition or attrition which, although perhaps of no value for salvation or justification, nevertheless involves a complete sorrow excluding every attachment to sin and a sincere purpose of not sinning henceforth (I–II, q. 109, aa. 6 and 7).

Proof 1. FROM FOUR TRUTHS OF FAITH CONCERNING THE NECESSITY OF GRACE IN FALLEN MAN

FIRST. According to faith, fallen man cannot turn himself to God and perform Penance without God's special assistance. But if man, by his own natural powers and without God's special assistance, could elicit an efficacious act of Penance, he could turn himself to God and perform Penance without God's special assistance; for that act is a true conversion to God as to the ultimate end, and true Penance. Indeed, where an act of contrition is concerned, it is a complete conversion to God and perfect Penance, especially if, with Molina and Cajetan, this conversion is said to regard God even as the end

in the supernatural order. Therefore, without God's special assistance, man cannot elicit an efficacious act of Penance.

On the major premise. It will suffice to recall, from those testimonies commonly brought forward in the treatise On Grace, certain documents of faith which teach the necessity of grace for conversion and Penance:

Psalm 84:5: "Convert us, O God our Saviour, and turn away Thy anger from us."

Jeremiah 31:18 ff.: "Thou hast chastised me, and I have been instructed, as a young bullock untamed. Convert me, and I shall be converted; for Thou art the Lord my God. For after Thou didst convert me, I did Penance; and after Thou didst show me, I struck my thigh."

Lamentations 5:21: "Convert us, O Lord, to Thee, and we shall be converted."

Ezekiel 11:19 ff.: "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them; and I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My commandments and keep My judgments."

Acts 5:31: "Him God hath exalted with His right hand to be Prince and Saviour, to give Penance to Israel and remission of sins."

Philippians 2:13: "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will" (cf. 1:6).

2 Timothy 2:25 ff.: "With modesty admonishing those who resist the truth, if peradventure God may give them repentance to know the truth, and they may recover themselves from the snares of the devil, by whom they are held captive unto his will."

The Second Council of Orange, canon 4: "If anyone contends that God awaits our will in order that we may be cleansed from sin, but does not confess that even our willingness to be cleansed is brought about in us through the infusion and operation of the Holy Spirit, he resists the Holy Spirit Himself, who says through Solomon, 'The will is prepared by the Lord' [Prov. 8:35, LXX], and the Apostle, who salutarily proclaims, 'It is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will' [Phil. 2:13]" (Denz. 177).

Canon 6: "If anyone says that mercy is divinely bestowed upon us when we believe, will, desire, strive, labour, pray, watch, study, ask, seek, and knock, but does not confess that our ability to believe, will, or do all these things as we ought is brought about in us through the infusion and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and if he makes the aid of grace subordinate to human humility or obedience, and does not agree that our being obedient and humble is itself the gift of grace, he resists the Apostle, who says, 'What hast thou that thou hast not received?' [1 Cor. 4:7], and, 'By the grace of God I am what I am' [1 Cor. 15:10]" (Denz. 179).

Canon 7: "If anyone maintains that, through the vigour of nature, he can think, as is fitting, or choose any good thing pertaining to the salvation of eternal life, or consent to the saving—that is, the evangelical—preaching, without the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who gives to all sweetness in consenting to and believing the truth, he is deceived by a heretical spirit, not understanding the voice of God in the Gospel, who says, 'Without Me you can do nothing' [John

15:5], and that of the Apostle, 'Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God' [2 Cor. 3:5]" (Denz. 180).

Canon 9: "It is a divine gift when we both think rightly and restrain our feet from falsehood and injustice; for whenever we do good things, God works in us and with us that we may work" (Denz. 182).

Canon 19: "Human nature, even if it had remained in that integrity in which it was created, could in no way have preserved itself without the assistance of its Creator. Therefore, since it cannot preserve without the grace of God the salvation which it received, how will it be able, without the grace of God, to restore what it lost?" (Denz. 192).

Canon 23: "Men do their own will, and not God's, when they do what displeases God; but when they do what they will in order to serve the divine will, although they do willingly what they do, it is nevertheless His will, by whom what they will is both prepared and commanded" (Denz. 196).

Canon 25: "To love God is entirely the gift of God. He Himself, who loves although He is not loved, granted that He should be loved. We were loved when we were displeasing, so that there might come to be in us that whereby we should be pleasing. For the Spirit of the Father and the Son, whom we love with the Father and the Son, 'poureth forth charity in our hearts' [Rom. 5:5]. And thus, according to the sentences of Sacred Scripture written above, or the definitions of the ancient Fathers, we must, with God's favour, both preach and believe this: that through the sin of the first man free choice was so bent and weakened that thereafter no one can love God as he ought, or believe in God, or perform for God what is good, unless the grace of divine mercy has gone before him" (Denz. 198 ff.).

The Council of Trent, session VI, canon 3: "If anyone says that, without the prevenient inspiration of the Holy Spirit and His assistance, man can believe, hope, love, or repent as he ought, so that the grace of justification may be bestowed upon him, let him be anathema" (Denz. 813).

The words of Augustine, which are the voice of Tradition itself, will be given below.

Molina attempts to escape the force of the foregoing argument (Concordia, disputation 15) by saying that the testimonies just cited do not concern conversion and Penance in just any manner, or according to the substance of the act, but only the conversion and Penance which are supernatural and dispose a man for justification. The Pelagians, whom the Church intended to condemn, taught that the powers of nature suffice for this.

Nevertheless, in the first place, several of the foregoing testimonies speak in an entirely general way and affirm simply that it is God who converts us to Himself and turns us away from sin, who removes from us the stony heart and bestows a new heart, and who impels us to Penance. But it is evident that an efficacious act of Penance, as regards its substance, involves a true conversion to God, since it proceeds from love of God Himself, at least as the natural end; a new heart, no longer stony or hardened in sin; and a true movement of Penance.

Moreover, the very limiting expressions added by the Councils of Orange and Trent, upon which Molina insists—namely, "a good which pertains to salvation," "to restore what he lost," and "to repent as he ought, so that the grace of justification may be conferred upon him"—although they refer principally to the impossibility of Penance insofar as it is justificatory, also imply the

impossibility of efficacious Penance simply and according to its substance; for such Penance restores something which man lost through sin, namely, conversion to God. It is also a certain good pertaining to salvation, since, according to the opponents, this same act is taken up by the grace of God and clothed with a supernatural character productive of justification. Consequently it is performed as is fitting for justification to be conferred upon man, at least remotely, insofar as it disposes him for a subsequent assistance of grace, just as supernatural attrition is ordered to justification to be conferred through the sacrament or through subsequent contrition.

Moreover, those very acts which Molina says constitute Penance by the powers of nature are said by the Councils to proceed from the gift of God and the assistance of grace.

For according to the Councils, it is from grace that a man wishes to be cleansed of sins, thinks rightly and restrains his feet from falsehood and injustice, wishes to do something so as to serve the divine will (Council of Orange, canons 4, 9, and 23), and conceives attrition with a purpose of not sinning, from consideration of the baseness of sin, lost beatitude, and the danger of punishments (Council of Trent, session XIV, chapter 4 and canon 5, to be cited below in article 32). According to Molina, however, it proceeds from the powers of nature that a man grieves over sins; that, by his own discernment, he conceives an absolute purpose of not sinning henceforth; that he conceives an absolute purpose of keeping the precepts, or the divine will; and that he conceives attrition with the purpose of not sinning from precisely the same motives enumerated by the Council of Trent (cf. the texts of Molina cited above).

In vain, however, does Molina, noticing the particular discordance of his doctrine with the words of the Council of Trent on this last point, attempt to dispel it as follows: "For this ... reason the Council defines the attrition which, together with the sacrament of Penance, suffices for justification to be a gift of God, because it arises from the gift of the fear of God imparted by the Holy Spirit through a special influence and assistance; but not that a purpose of sinning no more cannot exist, even as regards the substance of the act, without the special assistance of God."[225]

[225] Concordia, disp. 14, membr. 5, Parisiis, 1876, p. 77.

These words, as they stand, convey this inept proposition: According to the Council, attrition is a gift of God because it is a gift of God, or else it is a gift of God when it is a gift of God. Molina's meaning, however, is this: According to the Council, this attrition is not always a gift of God and supernatural. Yet the doctrine of the Council is wholly positive and affirmative: that attrition conceived from fear which involves—or, indeed, if it involves—a purpose of not sinning together with hope of pardon, is a gift of God, that is, supernatural. The Council, therefore, does not say that such attrition can be a gift of God, but that it is a gift of God.

Indeed, according to the mind of the Council, the reason why that attrition is a gift of God is that it entails the purpose of not sinning and the hope of pardon, or an efficacious act of Penance. For, of the two elements which the Council says are contained in it, namely the movement of fear and the purpose of not sinning, it presents the latter as the element determining that it is a gift of God. This is evident both from the conditional form of the qualification ('if it exclude the will to sin'), and from the fact that the movement of fear, according to everyone, has of itself nothing whereby it must necessarily be supernatural, since it can be merely servile fear conceived from the apprehension of punishment alone. This strengthens the force of the aforesaid conditional qualification, so that the

Council's obvious meaning is: Although attrition, insofar as it entails fear, can be simply a natural movement, nevertheless, insofar as it entails the will not to sin, it is a gift of God. It is evident also from the fact that the Council assigns no other reason, nor can any other be assigned, why such attrition is said to be supernatural and to require the assistance of God.

For the reason is not that such attrition is justificatory or meritorious and satisfactory, since this belongs to contrition alone; nor that it is directed to a supernatural end. For, first, one can ask whence it has this direction toward a supernatural end, unless precisely from the fact that it is an efficacious act of Penance, which, precisely because it is efficacious, cannot be directed to a merely natural end. Secondly, according to Molina, faith and hope, which are the principles of the movement of attrition, are natural acts, although directed toward a supernatural end; whence, according to Molina's own opinion, natural attrition itself is directed toward a supernatural end (although it is not supernatural), a point which Cajetan also affirms, albeit equivocally. Nor is the reason that attrition is remotely dispositive toward the justification which it effects together with the sacrament; for the question is whence it obtains this dispositive character, unless precisely from the fact that it is an efficacious act of Penance, or a true sorrow accompanied by a true purpose of not sinning, a character which cannot be referred merely to an extrinsic ordination on God's part.

Moreover, what the Pelagians thought, and what the Church thought in condemning their doctrine both at Orange and at Trent, is understood no less from the words of AUGUSTINE, who directly attacks them and speaks as the voice of the whole of Tradition on this matter of the necessity of grace:

Against Julian the Pelagian, book V, chapter 4, no. 14: 'Unless He Himself grants it, who does Penance? Or has he forgotten that the same Doctor Himself says, "If perchance God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth, and they may recover themselves from the snares of the devil" (2 Tim. 2:25–26)?' (M.L. 44, 791).

Letter 186, chapter 1, no. 5 (to Paulinus): 'He who thought that without His help he could preserve what He had given, went away into a far country, and, living prodigally, wasted everything; and, worn down by the misery of a hard servitude, came to himself and said, "I will arise and go to my father" (Luke 15:12–18). Who, then, inspired that good thought in him, if not the Father Himself, most merciful, even in secret? What, then, does that eminent minister of the New Testament mean when he says, "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God"?' (M.L. 33, 817 ff.).

Ibid., chapter 9, no. 33: 'Let it be acknowledged that pardon is granted to penitents according to the grace and mercy of God, not according to their merits; for the Apostle said that even Penance itself is a gift of God, when he says of certain persons: "If perchance God may give them repentance" (2 Tim. 2:25).' (M.L. 33, 829).

On the Grace of Christ, chapter 44 ff., no. 48 ff.: 'Let him, then, hear that venerable bishop [St. Ambrose], saying and teaching in the second book of his Exposition of the Gospel according to Luke (book II, no. 84, on Luke 3:22), that the Lord cooperates even with our wills. "You see, therefore," he says, "that the power of the Lord everywhere cooperates with human endeavours; so that no one can build without the Lord, no one can keep watch without the Lord, no one can begin anything without the Lord. And therefore, according to the Apostle, Whether you eat or drink, do all things for the

glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). You see how St. Ambrose, even with these words, set aside what men are accustomed to say, "We begin, and God brings to completion," saying: "No one can even begin anything without God." Likewise, in the sixth book of the same work, when he was treating of those two debtors to one creditor, he says: "According to men, perhaps he who owed more has offended more; but through the Lord's mercy the matter is changed, so that he loves more who owed more, if nevertheless he obtains grace" (book VI, no. 25, on Luke 7:41). See how most clearly the Catholic Doctor proclaims that even the love by which anyone loves more belongs to the benefit of grace. Finally, that even Penance itself, which the will undoubtedly performs, is accomplished by the mercy and help of the Lord, that same blessed Ambrose declares in the ninth book of his work, speaking thus: "Good are the tears which wash away guilt. In short, those upon whom Jesus looks weep. Peter denied the first time, and did not weep, because the Lord had not looked upon him; he denied the second time, and did not weep, because the Lord had not yet looked upon him; he denied even a third time, Jesus looked upon him, and he wept most bitterly" (book X, no. 89, on Luke 22:61).' (M.L. 44, 381 ff.).

On the Predestination of the Saints, chapter 2, nos. 3–6: 'First, therefore, we must show that the faith by which we are Christians is a gift of God. I see that an answer must be given to those who say that the divine testimonies which we have brought forward on this subject serve only to teach us that we indeed have faith itself from ourselves, but its increase from God—as though faith were not given to us by Him, but only increased in us by Him, on account of the merit by which it began from us. Thus they do not depart from that opinion which Pelagius himself was compelled to condemn in the episcopal judgment in Palestine, as the records themselves testify: "The grace of God is given according to our merits." For if the fact that we have begun to believe does not belong to God's grace, but rather only what is added to us on account of this, so that we may believe more fully and perfectly, then by this very fact we give the beginning of our faith to God first, in order that its completion may be given back to us in recompense, and whatever else we faithfully ask for.

'But why, against these assertions, do we not rather listen to the words, "Who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made him? For of Him, and by Him, and in Him are all things" (Rom. 11:35–36)? The very beginning of our faith, therefore—from whom does it come, if not from Him? ... Who, moreover, would say that he who has now begun to believe deserves nothing from Him in whom he has believed? Hence it comes about that all other things are said to be added to one who already merits them, by divine recompense; and thus that the grace of God is given according to our merits—precisely what Pelagius himself condemned, when it was brought against him, lest he should be condemned.

'Commending this grace, which is not given according to any merits but produces all good merits, [the Apostle] says, "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God" (2 Cor. 3:5). Let those who think that the beginning of faith comes from ourselves, but its completion from God, pay attention here and weigh these words. For who does not see that thinking precedes believing? No one believes anything unless he has first thought that it ought to be believed. ... Therefore, as regards religion and piety (of which the Apostle was speaking), if we are not sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, then surely we are not sufficient to believe anything of ourselves, as of ourselves—since we cannot believe without thinking—but our sufficiency by which we begin to believe is from God. Therefore,

just as no one is sufficient of himself to begin or complete any good work ..., so no one is sufficient of himself either to begin or to complete faith; but our sufficiency is from God: for faith, if it is not thought about, is nothing; and we are not sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God. ...'

'Why, moreover, the whole should not be attributed to man, so that he who was able to establish for himself what he did not have might also increase what he established, I do not see at all—except that resistance cannot be offered to the most manifest divine testimonies, by which even faith, from which the beginning of piety is taken, is shown to be a gift of God; such as the words, "God hath divided to every man the measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3), and "Peace be to the brethren, and charity with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 6:23), and other such passages.

'Not wishing, therefore, to oppose such clear testimonies, and nevertheless wishing to have from himself that he believes, man, as it were, makes a bargain with God: he claims a part of faith for himself and leaves a part for Him; and, what is more presumptuous, he takes the first part for himself and gives the subsequent part to Him; and in what he says belongs to both, he makes himself first and God second.' (M.L. 44, 961–964).

Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, book II, chapter 8, no. 17 ff.: 'Now this is what we must consider: whether God inspires the desire of good in man when he is unwilling and reluctant, so that he is no longer unwilling, no longer reluctant, but consenting to the good and willing the good. For they [i.e., the Pelagians] wish the desire for the good to begin in man from man himself, so that the grace of its completion may also follow upon the merit of this beginning. ... Here, however, we must object to them that we say that God inspires the desire of good in a man who is unwilling and reluctant—not just any desire for good, but even that desire which is itself imperfect. Perhaps, therefore, they at least preserve a place for grace in this way, so that they think a man can have without it the desire for good, but an imperfect desire; while a perfect desire ... they think he is altogether unable to have except through it.

'Yet even in this way they say that the grace of God is given according to our merits—the doctrine which Pelagius condemned in the ecclesiastical proceedings in the East out of fear of being condemned. For if the desire for good begins in us without the grace of God, this very beginning will be a merit to which the help of grace comes as though it were owed. ... But the Lord, as though answering these men, ... does not say, "Without Me you can bring nothing to completion," but "do nothing." For if He had said "bring to completion," they could say that God's help was necessary not for the beginning of good, which is from us, but for its completion. But let them hear the Apostle and the Lord. For when the Lord says, "Without Me you can do nothing," with this one word He includes both beginning and end. The Apostle, however, as though explaining this saying of the Lord, distinguished both more openly, saying: "He who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6). But in the Holy Scriptures we find still more in this same Apostle of whom we are speaking. We are speaking now of the desire for good: although they may wish its beginning to come from us and its completion from the Lord, let them see what answer they make to the Apostle when he says, "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God" (2 Cor. 3:5). To "think," he says, "anything," certainly anything good; but to think is less than to desire. ... Since, therefore, thinking is less than desiring, ... how can it be that for what is less, namely to think something good, we are not sufficient as of ourselves, but

our sufficiency is from God; yet for what is greater, namely to desire something good, we are sufficient through free choice without divine help? For here too the Apostle does not say, "Not that we are sufficient to think" what is perfect, as of ourselves; but, "to think," he says, "anything," the opposite of which is nothing.

'Whence come those words of the Lord: "Without Me you can do nothing"?' (M.L. 44, 583 ff.).

From these testimonies it appears that Molina gets himself out of the weight of the foregoing documents no less lightly than confidently when he writes: 'In the whole Council of Trent, in which everything pertaining to justification has been explained and defined so extensively, accurately, and clearly, not a trace is found of anything which appears to conflict with the position of the scholastics as expounded, even at first sight; whereas there are many things which favour and support it. Certainly, if everything said in this disputation is weighed as it ought to be, I do not know who would dare to say in future, when he reads in the Council of Orange or in any other ancient definition that no one can believe, hope, love, repent, ask, or think without grace and God's special assistance, that this is to be understood also of the substance of the act alone, and not rather as required for justification and salvation; or who would dare hereafter to reckon the opinion of several scholastics among the errors of Pelagius.'[226]

[226] Concordia, disp. 15, near the end, Paris, 1876, p. 84.

SECOND. According to faith, fallen man has no share, by his natural powers, in his preparation for justification, as is clear from the Council of Trent, the Council of Orange, Augustine, and the Apostle, who emphatically declare that God begins and perfects the good work in us.

But if man could elicit an efficacious act of Penance without the help of grace, he would possess at least the beginning of a preparation for justification. For who will say that an act whereby man turns away from sin with sorrow and with the purpose of not sinning henceforth, and turns himself to God through the love of God above all things, at least as the natural end, is no preparation for justification —that is, for man to be graciously regarded by God and gradually led to the gift of grace? For what more could man do by his own powers in order to be pleasing to God? Or is God overcome by man's love?

In the last two passages cited above Augustine says that the imperfect desire for good or for conversion, indeed even the preceding act by which one thinks about conversion, or by which one thinks that faith is to be embraced, is the beginning of justification, which must be attributed to grace alone. How much more, then, must this be said of that efficacious act by which a man resolves absolutely not to sin henceforth and turns toward God, whom he loves above all things, even as the supernatural end? Nor does it really appear what agreement can be found between these two statements of Augustine and Molina: 'As regards religion, we are not sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves'—'It is within the power of free choice to assent to things proposed as divinely revealed by an act which is merely natural and insufficient for justification.'

Moreover, according to the Council of Trent (session XIV, chapters 4 and 5), the act of attrition is a true preparation for grace. But an efficacious act of Penance, as Molina describes it, differs in nothing from the act of attrition as described by the Council of Trent, as is clear from what has just been said (pp. 415 ff.). Therefore, if a man could elicit the former act by his own powers, he could prepare himself for grace.

THIRD. According to faith, the work of justification itself, and particularly the act of contrition which justifies, is wholly the work of grace (Council of Trent, session VI, canon 1; Council of Orange, canons 6, 7, 9, 16, 18, 20, 22, 23, and 25). But on the hypothesis of the adversaries, both Molina and, more expressly, Cajetan (according to whom a man can elicit the very act of contrition which afterward, remaining the same as regards its substance and entity, would be informed by charity and would become salvific and justificatory), a part of the work of justification, namely the justificatory property, would have to be attributed to God, and a part to man, namely the entity or substance of the act. For these two concur to constitute that one and the same act which justifies. And this very reasoning is urged by Augustine in the last two passages cited above.

FOURTH. According to faith, the act of attrition which prepares for justification and the act of contrition which justifies are essentially supernatural (Council of Trent, session XIV, chapter 4 and canon 5; Council of Orange, canon 25). But according to the adversaries, these acts would not be such, because their very entity and substance would not be supernatural: the act which is elicited by natural powers before it is taken up by God through the assistance of grace or through charity remains the same as to its substance and continues to exercise the same physical influx which it exercised before.

Proof 2. FROM THE REASONING OF ST. THOMAS, THAT IS, FROM THE

STATE OF AVERSION FROM THE LAST END

Fallen man is formally turned away from the last end, and, at least in the present state of elevated nature, he is turned away from the last end both natural and supernatural. Therefore, he himself cannot elicit an efficacious act of Penance, whether contrition or attrition, by which he would turn to God through such a turning away from sin as entails absolute sorrow and the purpose of not sinning.

The inference is proved in three ways:

FIRST. Man, because he is turned away from God as from the last end and turned toward a changeable good as toward the last end, is absolutely turned away from God and absolutely turned toward a changeable good; so much so that this absolute aversion and conversion constitute a certain disposition and form of the will. Now operation follows being and proceeds from form, so that each thing acts in the way in which it is. Therefore, a man turned away from God as from the last end cannot, by his own powers and without the help of grace, elicit an act contrary to the aforesaid absolute disposition, such as would be an act of loving God above all things, or an absolute turning to God, and an efficacious act of Penance, or an absolute turning away from a changeable good. He can, however, elicit either imperfect act—that is, one of love of God that is not absolute, and one of Penance that is not absolute—concerning sin.

Nor is the force of the argument weakened because a man, while he is in the opposite disposition, that is, turned toward God as toward the last end, can perform an act of aversion from God, or can sin. For sin is a defect, not an effect; it arises from deficiency, not from efficiency, and accordingly requires no cause or form from which it might flow, but occurs because the operation which ought to flow from the form which the will has does not flow.

St. Thomas speaks to the point (Contra Gentiles, III, 158): 'Through mortal sin ... man is turned away from the last end. But man is not ordered to the last end except through grace. Therefore, only

through grace can man rise again from sin.' And in the same work (III, 161): 'When the mind of man has departed from the state of rectitude, it is clear that it has fallen away from the order of the due end. Therefore, what should have been in its affection as the last end becomes less loved than that to which the mind has become inordinately turned, as to a last end. Consequently, whenever something occurs consonant with the disordered end and contrary to the due end, it is chosen, unless the mind is brought back to the due order, so that it prefers the due end to all things—which is an effect of grace. ... When the mind has become inclined toward something [for example, a changeable good], it no longer stands equally toward either of two opposites [for example, God and a changeable good], but rather toward that to which it has become inclined.'

SECOND. From the fact that he is turned away from the last end, man lacks the intention of the last end; hence he does not possess within himself the principle from which he can be moved to choose this means toward that end, namely the turning away from sin through an efficacious act of Penance. For the cause which exercises an intentional influence upon choice is the end itself, just as the cause which exercises an efficient influence upon conclusions is the principles, in accordance with the philosophers' saying: 'As the end stands in practical matters, so do the principles in speculative matters.' Therefore, just as one who lacks an understanding of principles cannot assent to conclusions, so also one who lacks ordination to the last end cannot choose a means which is essentially ordered to it, such as an efficacious act of Penance.

THIRD. Since the order of agents corresponds to the order of ends (for every agent acts for an end), and the last end belongs properly to the first agent, the first agent alone, or God, moves man toward the last end, and therefore He alone can convert man, or bring him back, to the last end.

But since man is turned away from the last end through sin, the motion of God moving him toward the last end is not due to him, but surpasses the condition of his state, precisely on account of such an aversion from the last end; by reason of this he is also separated from the influx of the first agent. For the end and the agent, and the last end and the first agent, exist indivisibly and exercise their influence together; nor can one who is not attracted by the last end be moved by the first agent.

Hence, so long as there is only the general concurrence of the first agent, from whom man cannot be separated, just as he cannot be separated from the general character of the last end, the human will, turned away from the last end in the order of morality, cannot be efficaciously converted to it through Penance except by the gratuitous help of grace. By this help God either proposes Himself to the will as an end and impels it as an agent, or God, as first agent, impels the will by a special action so that it may turn back to Him as the last end.

St. Thomas speaks to the point (I–II, q. 109, a. 6): 'It is necessary ... since every agent acts for an end, that every cause should turn its effects toward its end; and therefore, since according to the order of agents or movers there is also the order of ends, it is necessary that man be converted to the last end through the motion of the first mover, but to the proximate end through the motion of some inferior mover; just as the soul of a soldier is turned to seeking victory by the motion of the general of an army, but to following the standard of a particular battle line by the motion of a tribune. Thus, therefore, since God is simply the first mover, it is by His motion that all things turn to Him according to the common intention of the good, by which each thing intends to be likened to God in its own way. Hence Dionysius [On the Divine Names, chapter 4, section 11] says that "God turns all things to Himself." But He turns just men to Himself as to a special end, which they intend, and to

which they desire to adhere as to their own good, according to Psalm 72:27: "It is good for me to adhere to God"; and therefore man's turning to God cannot take place except through God Himself converting him.'

Objection 1. From these arguments it follows only that man needs some special assistance from God, not that he needs the supernatural assistance of grace itself, since natural assistance suffices for man to turn away from sin and turn toward God, at least as his natural ultimate end.

Reply. The necessity of special assistance, even if only natural, is sufficient to overthrow Molina's opinion, which is content with divine general concurrence alone. Nevertheless, the necessity of supernatural assistance itself, in order that man may turn to the natural ultimate end itself, follows furthermore from the fact that man cannot turn absolutely to this end without at the same time turning to the supernatural end, because of the indirect dependence of the two orders and the subordination of the one to the other. For, as was said at the end of the preceding Conclusion, once the enlightenment of faith concerning man's elevation to the supernatural end is presupposed, natural reason itself, precisely in commanding conversion and Penance in relation to the natural ultimate end, indirectly commands the same in relation to the supernatural end, since the same God is both ends. Hence there would be no efficacious Penance for sin, nor any absolute conversion to God even as natural ultimate end, where there was no Penance and conversion also in relation to the supernatural ultimate end; for there would be no turning away from sin simply and in every respect, nor any love of God above all things and under every aspect.

Furthermore, a more universal reason may be assigned for the necessity of supernatural assistance for an efficacious act of Penance, one which applies even to fallen man in a possible state of pure nature. We may say, namely, with certain Thomists, that in every case and state man cannot repent efficaciously of sin without the supernatural assistance of grace—actual grace as regards attrition, but sanctifying grace as regards contrition—because every mortal sin, even in someone who is not elevated to the supernatural order or who does not know of it, is an absolute turning away from God simply and in Himself. Accordingly it entails a turning away from God according to both orders, natural and supernatural; and therefore, on account of its relation, at least implicit, to the supernatural order, it cannot be repaired except through supernatural assistance.[227]

[227] Cf. St. Thomas himself, De veritate, q. 28, a. 2, ad 5.

Further objection. In order to elicit an act of love of God as natural end, man does not need the supernatural assistance of grace, but natural assistance suffices for him. Therefore, by parity of reasoning, neither does he need grace in order to elicit an act of attrition or contrition for sin insofar as sin is opposed to the ultimate end in the natural order.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: this is true of a man who is not in the state of sin—let it pass; of a sinful man, I distinguish further: in the order of pure nature—let it pass; in the order of elevated nature—I deny it. I distinguish the consequent in the same way.

The reason for the restriction expressed by the words "let it pass" is that, in the treatise On Grace, two opinions are advanced regarding the possibility of eliciting an act of the love of God without the assistance of grace.

Some teach that man cannot elicit this act without the assistance of grace, whether in the order of elevated nature or even in the order of pure nature, and that in this respect there is parity between

the act of love and the act of Penance.

Others make a distinction. They say that, apart from the state of sin, man can elicit such an act of love by his natural powers with general concurrence alone; and therefore, both in the order of pure nature and in that of elevated nature, provided that he is not in sin, man elicits such an act by the powers of nature alone, so that in the present order of elevation it is done with grace, but not from grace. In the state of sin, however, owing to the very impediment of aversion from the ultimate end, this power is so bound that he cannot actually elicit that act: it is only an antecedent power, not a proximate one. But by God's special assistance (which according to some is a supernatural assistance of grace both in the order of elevation and in that of pure nature, while according to others it is such only in the present order of elevation), the impediment of aversion from God is removed, and the power becomes proximately ready to elicit love, which it elicits through the proper powers of nature with general concurrence alone. Yet for eliciting an act of contrition or attrition, in no order or case does man have a natural power, whether antecedent or bound; rather, he cannot elicit it except through the aforesaid special divine assistance. For it essentially involves an order to sin, or consists in turning away from sin and turning toward God, and a man who is turned away from God cannot turn himself toward God by the powers of nature, as was proved above. Hence the aforesaid divine assistance intervenes here not merely by removing an obstacle from a bound power, but by exerting a positive influence—indeed, by in some manner bestowing the very power of acting, as will be stated in the following Conclusion.

In either reply, however, this remains established: neither an act of love nor an act of attrition or contrition can, in the present order of elevation, actually be elicited by a sinful man through the powers of nature, whether with general concurrence alone or even with special natural assistance; rather, he needs the supernatural assistance of grace.

Objection 2, with Molina. St. Thomas, *On the Fourth Book of the Sentences*, distinction 17, question 2, article 1, question 1, reply to objection 6, teaches that an efficacious act of Penance can be elicited, as regards the substance of the act, without the assistance of grace: "Contrition is from God alone as regards the form by which it is informed; but as regards the substance of the act, it is from free choice, and from God, who operates in all the works both of nature and of the will."

"It is clearer than light that, in this passage, St. Thomas agrees with the common opinion of the other doctors. Nor has he written anything in the Third Part which is opposed to this doctrine." Thus Molina, *Concordia*, disputation 14, member 1 (Paris, 1876), p. 62; and there, in order to illuminate the meaning of that passage, he also brings forward the following texts, especially from the same question 2 of distinction 17 on the Fourth Book of the Sentences:

Article 1, question 3, solution: "Before grace is infused, there is no habit from which the act of contrition is subsequently elicited; and so attrition cannot in any way become contrition." From these words, as also from the reply to the difficulties, the mind of the Holy Doctor appears to be that, before the infusion of the habit of sanctifying grace, attrition, or an efficacious act of Penance, is a natural act, and that only through the infusion of grace does an act of Penance become supernatural, namely, when it proceeds from grace and charity under the form of contrition.

In the same place, *On the contrary*, *Furthermore*: "Natural things do not become gratuitous things according to the more common opinion. But that which exists before grace is called natural, and thus attrition is counted among natural things. Therefore it cannot become contrition, since contrition is a gratuitous good." From this, it is clear that, according to the Holy Doctor, the act of Penance preceding the infusion of grace is a natural act.

Article 2, question 6: "Contrition may be considered in two ways: namely, as regards its beginning and as regards its term. And I say that the beginning of contrition is the thought by which someone thinks of sin and sorrows over it, even if not with the sorrow of contrition, at least with the sorrow of attrition; but the term of contrition is when that sorrow is now informed by grace."

In favour of the same opinion, one may add *On the Second Book of the Sentences*, distinction 5, question 2, article 1: "For eliciting the act of a sufficient conversion, free choice prepares and disposes itself to receive grace through this act; but the efficaciousness of conversion for merit cannot exist except through grace. Hence the motion is one and the same in which grace is infused, which is a disposition for grace according as it proceeds from free choice, and meritorious according as it is informed by grace."

Reply. What the mind and doctrine of St. Thomas are is plainly evident from the very texts cited in the proof of this Conclusion. Moreover, Molina's commentary on the texts adduced from the Commentary on the Sentences is vain.

Concerning the first and principal text, we say that St. Thomas teaches only that in contrition two things must be considered: namely, the informing by charity and the very substance of the act. The first of these is from God alone, while the second is not only from God but also from free choice, from which that act proceeds. Having made this distinction, he replies to the objector (who was asking how contrition can be defined as "sorrow for sins freely assumed" when it is nevertheless a gift of God) that contrition is called sorrow assumed, or freely posited, not inasmuch as it entails the informing by charity, since in that respect it is a pure gift of God, or is effected by God alone, but inasmuch as it entails the very vital act of sorrow; for in that respect it is effected not only by God but also by the will, which elicits and produces it. St. Thomas therefore does not teach that contrition, as regards the very substance of the act, can be a natural act, or be elicited by the will alone without the assistance of grace. Indeed, he expressly says that the act is also from God, and not from God as concurring by general concurrence, but "from God, who operates in all the works both of nature and of the will"—that is, who operates through the different influence required by the different works of nature and of the will, among which are supernatural works that demand the assistance of grace. Besides, in the same article, questions 2 and 3, the Holy Doctor continually teaches or presupposes that contrition proceeds from grace already infused and is therefore supernatural.

Concerning the second text, we say that the Holy Doctor teaches only that contrition is not elicited except from the infused habit of grace (and that for this reason alone Penance acquires the character of a formed virtue); he does not teach, however, that every efficacious act of Penance derives its supernatural character from the infused habit of grace, such that every act preceding the infusion of grace is a merely natural act. St. Thomas wishes to demonstrate there that attrition cannot become contrition. This, however, he infers not from the fact that contrition is supernatural whereas attrition is natural, and that a natural thing cannot become supernatural, but from the fact that contrition,

unlike attrition, presupposes the infusion of grace, or has a different principle from attrition, and that things which have different principles cannot pass one into the other. For in the argument *On the contrary* he says: "Those things whose principles are wholly different cannot become one another. But the principle of attrition is servile fear, while that of contrition is filial fear. Therefore attrition cannot become contrition."

Concerning the third text, we say that in the words "That which exists before grace is called natural," grace is taken generally and not merely as sanctifying grace. Thus it is true that every act which precedes grace is natural. Nor does it follow from the fact that the Holy Doctor counts attrition among natural things that he is speaking not of grace in general, but only of sanctifying grace. For that would follow only if every attrition were supernatural or dependent upon actual grace; and this is not true, nor is it taught by St. Thomas, since he acknowledges both natural attrition (although this is not attrition strictly so called, as will be said in article 23), inasmuch as he teaches that an act of Penance exists by natural law, as we saw in the preceding Conclusion, and supernatural attrition, since he considers attrition conceived from servile fear to be such (cf. III, q. 85, a. 5, ad 3). From this the procedure of the Holy Doctor and the connection between the two arguments *On the contrary*, by which he intends to prove that attrition cannot become contrition, can be explained. For, since a twofold attrition is admitted, one natural and the other supernatural, in the first argument he shows that supernatural attrition cannot become contrition because, although supernatural, it has a different principle from contrition: not habitual grace but only actual grace. In the second he shows, on stronger grounds, that natural attrition cannot become contrition, precisely because it is natural and precedes all grace, even actual grace, whereas contrition is supernatural, since it follows upon sanctifying grace.

Concerning the fourth text, it is clear that the Holy Doctor says only that attrition precedes the form of grace, or sanctifying grace; from which it is wrongly inferred that attrition, even if efficacious, is a natural act, or elicited without the assistance of actual grace. Furthermore, the very contrition which is elicited after the infusion of grace precedes that same infusion in the character of a proximate disposition toward it.

Concerning the fifth text, it must be said that, as is evident from the context of that passage, the Holy Doctor intends solely to refute the opinion of certain persons who said that God effects man's conversion by infusing a twofold grace: one grace freely given, by which the act would be elicited according to its substance, and another grace making pleasing, by which the act would be made meritorious. He teaches, therefore, that this grace freely given ought to be rejected, because free choice suffices for eliciting the act according to its substance; but he does not say that free choice by itself alone and without the assistance of sanctifying grace elicits the act—which would be pure Pelagianism. Rather, he presupposes the contrary from what he has discussed elsewhere concerning the manner of justification, and he intimates it in the very text objected, when he says that one and the same motion (and therefore the substance of the motion) proceeds from free choice insofar as it is a disposition for grace, and depends upon that grace insofar as it is meritorious.

Conclusion III. Penance is a virtue essentially supernatural and infused, and not some natural and acquired virtue operating under the influence of the supernatural theological virtues (III, q. 85, a. 5; I–II, q. 51, a. 4; q. 63, a. 2).

Proof 1. FROM THE COUNCIL OF TRENT.

According to the Council of Trent, the act of Penance is no less supernatural than the acts of faith, hope, and charity; for, without making any distinction or discrimination among those acts, the Council defines in canon 3 of session VI: "If anyone says that, without the prevenient inspiration of the Holy Spirit and His assistance, man can believe, hope, love, or repent as he ought, so that the grace of justification may be conferred upon him, let him be anathema" (Denz. 813). Moreover, without any distinction, the Council refers the acts of faith, hope, and charity, as well as of Penance, to the same principle, namely, the inspiration and assistance of God.

Now the acts of faith, hope, and charity proceed from a divine principle, namely, from the infused supernatural habits, as even the adversaries concede; and the same Council teaches this equivalently in chapter 7 of the same session, when it says: "In ... justification ... 'the charity of God is poured forth in [our] hearts through the Holy Spirit' [Rom. 5:5] ... and inheres in them. Hence, in justification itself, together with the remission of sins, man receives all these infused at once ... faith, hope, and charity" (Denz. 800).

Therefore, according to the mind of the Council, the act of Penance likewise proceeds from a supernatural and infused habit.

Nor does it matter that the last passage makes no mention of Penance itself: first, because in the preceding passage the act of Penance is enumerated with the acts of faith, hope, and charity and is referred to the same principle; secondly, because in canon 11, where the teaching of chapter 7 is repeated in the form of a definition, mention is omitted also of faith and hope, and charity alone is mentioned; and finally, because in session XIV, chapter 4, the Council, when treating of contrition, equivalently asserts that it proceeds from the indwelling Holy Spirit (and thus from Him as infusing the habit), whereas, distinguishing contrition from attrition, it says that the latter is an impulse of the Holy Spirit although He does not yet dwell within the soul.

Against the force of this argument Vázquez objects (*In III*, q. 85, a. 5) in favour of the adversaries' opinion:

1. From the fact that the Council says that an act of Penance cannot be performed except with the assistance of God, it does not follow that this assistance is supernatural in its substance; for it can be understood as a natural divine assistance, necessary for eliciting a natural act of Penance, which, because it is not owed, is called grace and a supernatural gift.

2. Furthermore, even if such assistance is supernatural as regards its substance, it does not follow that the act of Penance which is elicited under it is itself supernatural as regards its substance. For neither does it follow, from the fact that fallen man needs supernatural assistance in order to elicit a natural act of the love of God above all things, that this act of love is itself supernatural.

3. Finally, even if the act of Penance is said to be supernatural, it does not follow that the habit or virtue of Penance is supernatural; for that act can be called supernatural insofar as it is under the direction of the theological virtues, especially insofar as it is commanded by charity.

Reply.

1. The Council requires for the act of Penance the same assistance which it requires for the acts of faith, hope, and charity, and thus assistance which is essentially supernatural. It is manifest that the Council speaks of no other than essentially supernatural assistance when, in chapter 5 of the same session, it says that "the beginning of justification [is to be derived from] ... prevenient grace."

2. As to the objection drawn from the necessity of grace for a natural act of the love of God, the supposition is denied, and consequently so is the alleged parity with an act of Penance. For that act of love requires grace, not directly in order to be elicited, but only by way of presupposition, namely, in order that the obstacle of sin may be removed. Once this obstacle is removed, that act of love of God is elicited by the natural power itself. Conversely, according to the Council, the act of Penance requires grace as the principle from which it is elicited, since it requires this no otherwise than the acts of faith, hope, and charity themselves.

3. The Council does not say that an act of Penance is supernatural by the direction of the theological virtues or by the command of charity, but that it is elicited under God's assistance just as the acts of faith, hope, and charity themselves are elicited. Hence the act is supernatural directly by reason of God's assistance, and not through its association with the theological virtues. Moreover, the command of charity cannot change the nature of an act of Penance, or make it supernatural in the very character of Penance. For the command of one virtue over another neither concerns nor influences the subordinate virtue's attainment of its proper object, which is proper and inalienable to it, but only causes the subordinate virtue, by reason of that command, to attain the higher end which is the proper object of the commanding virtue.

Proof 2. FROM THE VERY OBJECT OR ACT OF THE VIRTUE OF PENANCE.

The specific act of the virtue of Penance, namely, contrition, is essentially supernatural. Therefore the virtue itself, which takes its species from its object, is also supernatural.

It should be noted in passing that we are speaking here of contrition alone, both as distinct from attrition and, more generally, from an efficacious act of Penance—not because these are not supernatural or are not true Penance as contrition is (indeed, the contrary is established by the reasoning presently to be offered), but because contrition alone is an act of Penance as a virtue.

The antecedent is proved in two ways:

First, from the very ordering to justification.

For, according to faith, contrition, and indeed attrition also, disposes a man for supernatural justification: contrition proximately, attrition remotely. But every disposition is of the same order as the form for which it disposes, since it is essentially ordered toward that form; indeed, if it is a proximate disposition strictly so called, it is also of the same species. Therefore contrition, and also attrition, is an essentially supernatural act; indeed, contrition is also of the same species as justification itself, that is, sanctifying.

Secondly, from the very substance of the act.

For there is, at least in the state of elevation, no efficacious act of Penance which is not essentially supernatural, whether it be attrition or, still more, contrition. For, as we observed in the preceding Conclusion, every sin involves an absolute turning away from God and, consequently, at least upon the supposition of elevation to the supernatural order, it involves a turning away from God both as the natural and as the supernatural end. Hence every efficacious act of Penance, since it is a turning away from sin simply and absolutely, must involve a turning away from sin as opposed to God under both aspects, and conversion to God as end in both orders; and this cannot be effected except by an act which is essentially supernatural.

We have said "at least in the state of elevation," because with certain Thomists it can be said that even in the order of pure nature, and absolutely, sin implicitly turns man away from God even as He belongs to the supernatural order, inasmuch as it turns him away from God simply and as He is in Himself; and therefore an efficacious act of Penance is simply and necessarily supernatural in every order and under every supposition.

You will say: The love of God as natural end never becomes essentially supernatural from the fact that, once elevation and the enlightenment of faith are presupposed, it extends in some way to God as supernatural end, namely, by prescribing the love of God as supernatural end. Therefore, by parity of reasoning, neither does an act of Penance become essentially supernatural from the fact that it indirectly regards God as supernatural end.

Reply: I concede the antecedent and deny the consequent, because of the difference between an act of love and an act of Penance, a difference founded upon the very distinction between their objects. For love regards God as good, whereas Penance regards Him as offended. Now two kinds of goodness can be distinguished in God, one of the natural and the other of the supernatural order ("Good arises from an integral cause"), and to these two essentially distinct acts of man can be directed, though they are connected with one another. But there cannot be distinguished two offences against God ("Evil arises from any defect whatsoever"), because any offence subverts the whole divine order and reaches God according to what He is in Himself (whence it is also said to be simply infinite in the moral order, and cannot be compensated by man through any act of charity). Consequently a twofold act of Penance, one natural and one supernatural, cannot be directed to God. Hence it is understood why, on account of the connection of the natural and supernatural orders, natural love of God prescribes supernatural love alone, whereas Penance with respect to God as the end of nature does not merely prescribe, but is itself, a supernatural act.

You insist: An act of love also regards God as offended, since it includes hatred of sin. Therefore the parity between an act of love and an act of Penance remains.

Reply: The hatred of sin included in love does not formally regard God as offended, but the evil of God, just as love regards the good of God; for a contrary act is opposed to a contrary object, and the contrary of good is evil. Sin, as an offence, is formally regarded by Penance alone; for, since an offence is the violation of a right, no act of virtue regards it except the act by which the violation of that right is repaired. Hence there are two loves of God and consequently two hatreds of sin, one natural and the other supernatural; but there is only one efficacious Penance, and it is supernatural.

FROM THE FACT, HOWEVER, THAT PENANCE IS A SUPERNATURAL VIRTUE, IT FOLLOWS IMMEDIATELY AND NECESSARILY THAT IT IS A VIRTUE NOT ACQUIRED BUT

INTRINSICALLY INFUSED.

For it cannot be acquired from natural acts, since an effect exceeds its cause. Nor can it be generated from supernatural acts, just as a natural virtue is generated from natural acts; for a supernatural virtue differs from a natural one in this, that it not only gives the ability to act well but the very ability to act, whence it is called a habit possessing the character of a power. But a power is not generated by acts; rather, it flows from the very essence of a thing and is produced through the same emanation from the agent by which the agent produces the substance itself. Hence no supernatural virtue can be acquired; rather, all flow from sanctifying grace, which, insofar as it is an entitative habit, stands in relation to the operative habits of the virtues in some manner as a supernatural substance does; and it is infused into man by God alone, as by a creator, together with his powers.[228]

[228] Cf. the Salmanticenses, De Virtutibus, disp. 3, dub. 3, n. 59.

Moreover, no supernatural act can be assigned from which the habit of Penance could be generated in any manner.

For it cannot be generated from the acts of other virtues, such as faith and charity, since they cannot generate a habit of a different species.

Nor can it be generated from the acts of the virtue of Penance itself, by which at least another habit of Penance would be caused. For, as St. Thomas says, "Acts which are produced from an infused habit do not cause any habit, but confirm a pre-existing habit [inasmuch as they bring it to a higher degree, not efficiently, but dispositively and by way of merit, or cause it to be more deeply rooted in the subject]; just as remedies employed upon a man who is already healthy do not cause any health, but strengthen the health previously possessed" (I–II, q. 51, a. 4, ad 3). From this too it is evident that, if the acts of any virtue were to cause a new habit differing only numerically, there would follow in the same subject several accidents differing only numerically, or indeed innumerable such accidents (for there would be no reason why such generation should be limited, and this holds for every virtue). But it is impossible for one subject to have two accidents differing only numerically, just as two substantial forms differing only numerically cannot exist in one matter; for, since accidents are individuated by their subject, only one individual accident corresponds to one subject, and the same species cannot be individuated twice by the same subject.

Finally, a supernatural habit cannot be caused by supernatural acts of Penance preceding the virtue of Penance itself, which are elicited under the movement of actual grace alone. For, in order that a habit may be generated in some power, it is required that there be in the same subject some higher power, through whose frequent motion a habit is generated which is a certain participation in that higher power (for a power cannot generate a habit in itself, since it would thus be both agent and patient), just as, through the motion of reason, acquired virtues are generated in both rational and sensitive appetite.[229]But no supernatural power is found in man (for example, a supernatural reason) through whose motion a habit might be produced in the power of the appetite; nor is there a supernatural substance from which it could flow; rather, all supernatural qualities are habits, and a habit does not generate a habit.

[229] Cf. I–II, q. 51, a. 2; Quaestiones Disputatae De Virtutibus in communi, a. 9; Salmanticenses, De Virtutibus, disp. 1, dub. 3, § 3.

St. Thomas on the point:

Here, q. 85, a. 5: "[Penance], as to its habit, ... is infused immediately by God, without us acting principally, yet not without our cooperating dispositively by certain acts."

I–II, q. 51, a. 4: "There are certain habits by which man is well disposed toward an end exceeding the faculty of human nature, which is the ultimate and perfect beatitude of man. ... And because habits must be proportioned to that toward which man is disposed through them, it is therefore necessary that habits disposing to such an end also exceed the faculty of human nature. Hence such habits can never be present in man except through divine infusion, as is the case with all the gratuitous virtues."

I–II, q. 63, a. 2: "The virtue of man perfects him in relation to good. But since the nature of good consists 'in mode, species, and order,' as Augustine says [*On the Nature of Good*, ch. 3], or in number, weight, and measure, as is said in Wisdom 11, it is necessary that man's good be considered according to some rule. This rule is twofold, as was said above (q. 19, aa. 3 and 4), namely, human reason and divine law. And because the divine law is the higher rule, it extends to more things; so that whatever is regulated by human reason is regulated by the divine law also, but not conversely. Therefore the virtue of man ordered toward a good which is measured according to the rule of human reason can be caused by human acts, insofar as such acts proceed from reason, in whose power and rule such a good consists. But a virtue ordering man toward a good insofar as it is measured by divine law and not by human reason cannot be caused by human acts, whose principle is reason, but is caused in us only by divine operation. And for this reason Augustine [*On Psalm* 118, sermon 26] placed in his definition of virtue the words: 'Which God works in us without us.'"

THE ADVERSARIES OBJECT. According to Aristotle (*Ethics*, I, ch. 1), a lower art, under the direction of a higher art, can attain the end of the latter. Therefore reason and the will, under the direction of faith and the other theological virtues, can in their own act attain a supernatural end; and thus an act of supernatural Penance, and from its repetition an acquired virtue of Penance, could be produced without its having to be infused by God.

Reply: A higher art, and in the present case a theological virtue, influences the lower reason in two ways: either directly, by command, whereby the act of the lower reason is elevated to attaining the higher end, just as every natural act is elevated by the command of charity to the dignity of merit in relation to a supernatural reward; or indirectly and from without, namely, by removing from the subject impediments to the act of the lower reason. In neither way, however, does the influence of the higher art furnish the lower one with powers for performing an act of which it is incapable within its own order; rather, it merely conditions or elevates an act that can be performed by the lower one through its own powers. But natural reason can in no way, by its own powers, elicit an efficacious act of Penance. Consequently neither the influence of a command nor the removal of the impediment of sin by the theological virtues contributes anything toward the eliciting of an act of contrition, although it contributes to the readier eliciting of an imperfect act of Penance, which reason can produce by its own powers.

Conclusion IV. Besides the supernatural and infused virtue of Penance, there is, neither in the sinner nor in the just man, another natural and acquired virtue of Penance which is a virtue properly so called; whereas, besides supernatural prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, there are natural prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

Proof.

As is clear from the preceding Conclusion, an efficacious, or complete and perfect, act of Penance cannot be elicited by man through natural powers, but is essentially supernatural; whereas the natural act of repentance, of which we spoke in Conclusion I, is essentially an imperfect act within the order of repentance. But an imperfect act cannot constitute a virtue properly so called, since it belongs to the nature of virtue to render its subject and his operation perfect, or good simply speaking, according to the well-known definition of Aristotle that will be cited presently. Therefore there is no natural and acquired Penance which is a virtue properly so called.

This reasoning applies not only to a sinful man, who is turned away from God, but also to a just man.

For the presence of grace, and the consequent conversion of man to God even under the aspect of the natural ultimate end, cannot alter the native incapacity of reason to elicit a natural act by which sin is detested as a turning away from God simply and under every aspect, both as natural and as supernatural end, such as is precisely an efficacious act of Penance. Hence, however much a man in the state of grace might repent from a natural motive, or from detestation of sin as opposed to the natural ultimate end, a virtue of Penance would not thereby be generated, since there would not be a perfect act: sin would not be repudiated simply but only under one aspect, namely, as contrary to the natural ultimate end. Moreover, if the presence of grace were the reason why natural repentance was a true virtue, it would follow that, once grace was removed, that virtue itself would cease to be a true virtue, or would be so weakened that it could not produce its proper act. This is utterly unfitting, both because it does not occur in the other moral virtues, and because repentance of this kind would be at once a natural and a supernatural virtue, since it would depend upon grace in its character as a virtue.

But in a sinful man, besides the aforesaid argument from the impossibility of contrition, a natural virtue of Penance properly so called is excluded by the very fact of his turning away from the ultimate end; for, while this turning away remains, neither the definition of virtue nor the principle from which a moral virtue is generated can be verified. This is shown in parts.

First, Aristotle gives a twofold definition of virtue, namely, "an elective habit according to right reason" (*Ethics*, II, ch. 6), and "a disposition of what is perfect toward what is best" (*Physics*, VII, ch. 3); these amount to the same as "it makes its possessor and his work good" (ibid.). But because of the sinner's turning away from the ultimate end, neither definition applies to natural repentance.

For, in the first place, it is not an *elective habit*, since right choice presupposes rectitude of the will concerning the end; but the sinner, without the help of grace, cannot have rectitude of will regarding the ultimate end even in the natural order, although he may have it concerning some proximate end, that is, he cannot love God above all things even as natural end, although he can love some honourable good. Consequently, he cannot have right choice concerning that which immediately regards the ultimate end and presupposes love of God above all things, that is, concerning the destruction of an offence against God. Accordingly, he cannot repent according to an elective habit, however much he may tend against sin through a movement of repentance, even though he can choose the pursuit of some honourable good and the destruction of its contrary.

This is illustrated by comparison with the habit of science, which cannot be generated in an intellect that lacks the principle from which the science proceeds. For, as Aristotle and St. Thomas teach, the

end is related to matters of action as the principle is related to matters of speculation; just as science consists in deducing conclusions from principles, so virtue consists in choosing means with a view to an end. Hence, just as science cannot be generated in one who lacks its principle, however much he himself may draw conclusions and argue, so a habit of virtue cannot be generated in one who lacks an ordering to the end, however much he may himself connect and choose the means.

Moreover, natural repentance in a man turned away from the ultimate end is not a *disposition of what is perfect toward what is best*, that is, one which makes man simply good and renders his operation simply good, in some determinate order or matter. For natural repentance in a man turned away from God accomplishes neither of these things in the order of repentance or of destroying sin; however much its acts may be multiplied, the destruction of sin will never be perfected, because turning away from sin presupposes conversion to God.

Secondly, the principle from which every moral virtue is generated in the rational and sensitive appetite is the dictate of reason, firm and perfect, the firmness of which is impressed upon the appetite under the character of virtue or of a disposition difficult to change.

But because a man is turned away from the ultimate end and is therefore powerless to remove sin, human reason is powerless to frame a firm and perfect judgment or dictate of reason concerning repentance ("Repentance must be made," or "Sin must be removed"). For it cannot conceive or propose an efficacious means by which sin may be removed through natural powers; rather, it can only judge indeterminately and in general that one must repent or act against sin, and perhaps, conjecturally and uncertainly, judge that sin can in fact be removed. Hence from repeated movements of reason of this kind there cannot be generated in the appetite a habit or firm disposition toward repentance. Either no disposition or facility at all is generated—which is the more probable view—or, if some disposition to repentance of whatever kind is induced, it will not only be a simple disposition, that is, one easily changed in itself and objectively, but also a disposition in the proper class of dispositions, that is, one simply and on the part of the subject easily changed;[230]it will by no means be a habit or virtue, whether possessing the proper state of virtue or even possessing the state of a simple disposition.

[230] It can happen that a simple disposition becomes, accidentally and on the part of the subject, difficult to change and assumes a certain state of a habit; just as a habit or virtue, which is in itself difficult to change, may accidentally and on the part of the subject become easily changed and lose the connatural state of a habit, assuming the state of a simple disposition, as happens in other moral virtues existing in a sinner.

This is illustrated by comparison with opinion, which cannot attain the character of a habit, but only of a simple disposition, because it does not attain what is infallibly true, as an intellectual habit does, since it does not proceed from a firm principle.

For a fuller understanding of these matters, observe with St. Thomas (*Disputed Questions on the Virtues in General*, aa. 1 and 9; I–II, q. 63, a. 2) the following concerning the generation of habits from a principle of reason.

Merely active powers—such as the divine power, the agent intellect, and natural powers—do not need a habit, which is the complement of a power; for they are complete in themselves, so that their operative strength is the power itself. Likewise, merely passive powers, that is, the sensitive powers considered in themselves, do not receive a habit, for they indeed need to be perfected by active

powers, but not in such a way that what is superinduced remains in them as a form or operative complement, but only as a sort of passion, as species do in sight; and therefore the virtue of these powers is not a habit, but is the power itself. Powers which are at once active and passive, namely, the possible intellect, insofar as it is moved by the agent intellect (thus the habit of science is generated in it), and the will, insofar as it is moved by reason (thus a habit of virtue is generated in it), do need a habit: these powers, in order to be ready for their operation, require the complement of a higher power, which is present to them as a form and operative principle (*Disputed Questions on the Virtues in General*, a. 1).

In natural matters, then, the generation of habits begins from the agent intellect, which is the source of the order of understanding, proceeds thence to the possible intellect, then to the will, and finally to the sensitive appetite insofar as it is subject to the will (ibid., a. 9). But the aforesaid movement of a higher power is required in an inferior power in order to overcome its native disproportion to some act, or to overcome an objective difficulty, which belongs to the essence of habit, so that the inferior power may act as raised by a higher power to a higher order. The form induced into the inferior power by the movement of the higher is either something transitory, received as a passion, or something permanent, received as an inherent form, which is obtained through repeated movement of the higher power and is called a disposition. This is imperfect if it is induced by movement not sufficiently repeated, and is called a simple disposition; but it is perfect when it becomes, as it were, converted into nature, and is called a habit. "It is for this reason that custom [or habit] is said to be another nature. ... Hence, if the matter is rightly considered, the virtue of the appetitive part is nothing other than a certain disposition, or form, stamped and impressed upon the appetitive power by reason" (ibid.).

As regards the generation of the habit of virtue in the will, it must be noted that the intellect moves this faculty in two ways: "both by specifically proposing the object that is to be pursued, and by imposing the pursuit of it. And in this way it places nothing in the act of the will which exceeds the powers of the will; nor, properly speaking, is it even superior, but it merely directs and illuminates the will, which is a blind power, lest it proceed blindly. Or else it does so in such a way that it not only goes before, but also directs and regulates by virtue of synderesis and prudence; in fact it constitutes in the act something exceeding the power of the will, namely, *rectitude and order*, wherein consists the proper mean of reason belonging to virtue, and in general it performs the proper function of a superior power, raising and drawing the inferior power to a superior order, whether in passing or by way of passion, or by impressing it permanently and stamping upon it its own form by which it readily, firmly, and easily operates in its proper manner. And this it accomplishes through repeated movements, by means of which the frequency of acts generates a habit."[231]

[231] Salmanticenses, De Poenitentia, disp. 5, dub. 5, § 4, n. 213; Cursus Theologicus, vol. 19, Paris, 1883, p. 530.

Now, with regard to an act of natural repentance, the intellect moves the will only in the first way, namely, by proposing the object and imposing its pursuit, but not by regulating the act of the will through the virtue of prudence and the firm dictate of reason. For, as has just been said, it cannot frame such a dictate concerning an impossible object, that is, concerning the reparation of sin by natural powers. Hence no habit or virtue in the will is produced by such a movement of the intellect; indeed, not even an imperfect disposition, since such a movement is in no way regulative, unless reason is improperly said to frame for itself some generic dictate concerning the possibility and

necessity of repenting in some manner (though not efficaciously), or an uncertain and conjectural dictate concerning the possibility of efficaciously removing sin, and from the movement of this imperfect dictate some imperfect disposition is said to result in the will, altogether different in kind from that in which the virtue of Penance properly so called consists.

From what has been said, the difference between Penance and the other moral virtues is understood, and at the same time the PRINCIPAL OBJECTION OF THE ADVERSARIES is excluded, an objection proceeding from the alleged parity with the other moral virtues, such as prudence, fortitude, and temperance, which are virtues properly so called even in the natural order.

And first, the disparity is evident *on the part of the perfect act*.

For those virtues, independently of grace, can elicit a perfect act in their own matter, although with a certain instability on the part of the subject, because their proper object is connected with the ultimate end only remotely. Penance, however, cannot independently of grace consist in a perfect act against sin.

Secondly, the disparity is evident *on the part of the definitions of virtue*.

For the aforesaid virtues do not regard the ultimate end, or God, except remotely. Hence the choice of determinate matter, in which they themselves consist, does not presuppose rectitude of the will regarding the ultimate end, but only regarding some proximate end or particular honourable good. Consequently, they can also render the subject perfect and his operation perfect within that determinate order. Hence, even without the assistance of grace whereby rectitude of the will regarding the ultimate end alone is introduced, they are true virtues properly so called, although on account of the defect of that rectitude they *do not obtain the proper state of virtue* or perfect firmness, but possess accidentally the condition of a simple disposition easily changed. On the contrary, Penance regards God as proximate end, who is accordingly included in its formal object, as was said in Article XII (p. 299). Hence, when rectitude of the will regarding the ultimate end has been removed, every act of Penance necessarily proceeds from a principle that is unstable and therefore cannot consist in a firm choice, as belongs to the nature of virtue.

Thirdly, the disparity is evident *on the part of the principle from which a moral virtue is generated*, or of the dictate of reason.

For, since the matter of the other moral virtues does not immediately regard the ultimate end but is enclosed within a certain particular order complete in itself, man, however much he is turned away from the ultimate end, will be able to frame a dictate of reason sufficiently firm and perfect in its own order concerning the aforesaid matter, to be attained and regulated; and he will therefore be able to move the will with sufficient firmness for there to be generated in it, from repeated movements, a firm disposition or habit properly so called, even though, accidentally, or on account of the will's turning away from the ultimate end, this habit may not obtain the subjective firmness or connatural state of virtue.

Other objections of the adversaries.

OBJECTION 1. Wherever there is a supernatural virtue, there is a corresponding natural virtue for regulating similar matter of the inferior order.

REPLY. The assertion is denied. The inference holds, indeed, from a natural virtue to a supernatural virtue, but not from the latter to the former. This is clear both from the fact that there is a supernatural virtue of charity but no natural virtue of charity, since the will of itself and without a habit is inclined toward the good and the natural end, and from reason: for, as far as the inferior rule extends, the superior rule also extends, because of its greater efficacy, but not conversely. To the point St. Thomas says, I–II, q. 63, a. 2 (cited above, p. 434): "Because the divine law is the higher rule, it extends to more things; so that whatever is regulated by human reason is regulated by the divine law also, but not conversely."

OBJECTION 2. For natural Penance to be a virtue properly so called, it suffices that it incline a man to an act that is perfect in its own order, although not simply and in every order.

REPLY. An act of natural Penance is not perfect even in its own natural order; for sin against the natural ultimate end is not reparable except through supernatural contrition, or through an act by which sin is cast away simply and as contrary to the ultimate end in every order.

OBJECTION 3. From the repetition of any act there necessarily follows some facility, or disposition, or habit, or virtue. Therefore natural Penance in a sinner can be a virtue generated from the repetition of acts.

REPLY. From the repetition of acts, some facility does indeed follow, but not necessarily a disposition or a quality superadded to the power; for this is generated only when the power is raised by the movement of a higher power toward something exceeding its own capacity. Thus no disposition is generated from natural acts of the love of God, since the will is naturally borne toward that love, unless there be the impediment of sin. Moreover, when a disposition is generated, it is not necessarily a habit or a disposition difficult to change, as is evident in opinion, which is an unstable disposition, or an adherence of the intellect that is not firm. Again, when a habit is generated, it is not necessarily a virtue in the strictest sense, since it can fall short of the kind of perfection proper to virtue, as is evident from continence (cf. above, Article XII, p. 310 ff.) and perseverance (cf. I–II, q. 58, a. 3, ad 2; II–II, q. 137, a. 1, ad 1).

From repeated acts of natural repentance in a sinner there thus arises some facility in repenting, which nevertheless is not a virtue, nor a habit, nor a disposition accidentally difficult to change; indeed, more probably it is not even a disposition easily changed.

OBJECTION 4. Natural repentance in a sinner inclines him toward praiseworthy acts, that is, toward detesting sin as contrary to reason and to God, the author of nature. Therefore it is a virtue.

REPLY. As has been said, natural repentance, even if it is a disposition, is not a habit, because it cannot firmly incline one to the aforesaid act; much less is it a virtue, since it does not incline one to detest sin simply and under every aspect, which belongs to the nature of the virtue of Penance.

It should be noted with the Salmanticenses that "the good and praiseworthy is not convertible with virtue properly so called; otherwise there would be no morally good act which was not the act of some virtue properly so called, which is false, as is evident in both orders, natural and supernatural, in which it is necessary to admit numerous honourable and morally good acts which do not arise from virtue properly so called." Thus, in the order of grace, it cannot be denied that there are pious affection and many inspirations and ineffectual affections; and, in the order of nature, natural love,

shame, continence, and perseverance, as St. Thomas maintained. In all these instances the argument that is raised against us applies. But because their choice either is not efficacious and perfect, or does not tend toward determinate means but regards a most general end, not the end of this or that determinate matter, for that reason it is not the choice proper to virtue, nor does it introduce virtue.

"Natural Penance is deficient at the same root: for, in order to be a true virtue within the natural order, it ought to be opposed not only to this or that sin, but to every sin; since it ought to have in its own order what belongs to infused Penance in the supernatural order, as is evident from the example of natural love of God above all things in relation to the love of charity. Wherefore Penance, which is a true virtue, cannot coexist with some mortal sin, since it is opposed to every mortal sin whatsoever. But an acquired virtue, according to St. Thomas, I–II, q. 63, a. 2, ad 2, can coexist with some mortal sin; therefore it is possible for there to be an acquired virtue, and consequently also a habit of choice with an efficacious and proper choice. For the latter pursues the chosen means, which is efficacious for destroying that which is intended to be destroyed. But Penance intends to destroy not one sin or another, but all sins, if it is to be true Penance."[232]

[232] De Poenitentia, disp. 5, dub. 5, § 4, n. 214; Cursus Theologicus, vol. 19, Paris, 1883, p. 530 ff.

OBJECTION 5. Impenitence is a vice within the natural order itself. Therefore Penance, which is its opposite, is a true virtue within the same order.

REPLY. I concede the antecedent and deny the consequence, because it proceeds from a false supposition. Vice is not directly opposed to virtue, but to the good and praiseworthy; for vice arises from any defect of goodness, whereas virtue means not just any good and praiseworthy thing but a perfect good in some order (II–II, q. 144, a. 1, ad 4). Hence, from the fact that natural repentance is opposed to the vice of impenitence, it does not necessarily follow that it is a virtue, but only that it is a good and praiseworthy act.

OBJECTION 6. From repeated acts of supernatural Penance, or contrition, some facility and disposition for eliciting them is acquired; but this disposition is natural, both because it actually exists in a natural power, namely, in the will, and because a supernatural disposition cannot be acquired. This is confirmed by St. Thomas, who teaches in the *Disputed Questions on Truth*, q. 17, a. 1, ad 4, between the arguments on the contrary: "From acts of infused charity there is generated some habit of choice," which the holy Doctor does not understand as supernatural, for in I–II, q. 51, a. 4, ad 3, he teaches that acts proceeding from an infused habit do not generate another infused habit, but confirm the preceding one.

REPLY. The facility caused by acts of supernatural Penance, however it may be conceived, is itself supernatural, because from a supernatural cause there can be caused nothing but a supernatural effect; nor is it to be called something acquired, just as the acts themselves are not called acquired, but rather caused or emanating. Hence it is a certain supernatural emanation or property of the supernatural acts themselves (although it is not a habit properly so called, since a habit is not caused by a habit). Nor does it matter that it is in a natural power, because that power is not in potency according to that which it is as a power, or immediately, but according to that by which it is clothed with a habit, or through the mediation of the habit, whence follows the nature of the habit, just as the acts themselves do.

St. Thomas, in the passage objected from I–II (which we cited above in Conclusion III, Latin p. 433 ff.), very explicitly denies that either an infused or an acquired habit is generated from the acts of an infused virtue, as is clear from the very objection to which he intends to reply, and to which everything is reduced: if there were in man some infused virtue, there would also be an acquired virtue of the same species, caused by the acts of the infused virtue. Hence, unless we wish to admit that St. Thomas contradicts himself, his very words objected from the *Disputed Questions on Truth* must either be understood of the aforesaid supernatural facility, which the holy Doctor calls a habit improperly so called,[233]or must be received as an attempt at a doctrinal explanation, not chosen by the holy Doctor himself but touched upon by him in passing from the writings of other theologians; for he does not simply set forth those words, but under the form of a disjunctive affirmation, and in such a way that at the end of the text he chooses the other member of the disjunction.

[233] Cajetan too can be interpreted in this way when he writes (on q. 85, a. 6): "It must be known that there is something else to have an 'elective habit according to right reason' [Aristotle, Ethics II, ch. 6], and something else to have a similar habit according to the reason of virtue. For example, one thing is to have an acquired habit of loving God and neighbour, even according to the rule of faith; and another is to have the virtue of charity. For to have the virtue of charity is to have the infused habit 'distinguishing the children of God from the children of perdition' [Augustine, On the Trinity, XV, ch. 18]; but to have an acquired habit of charity is not to have a virtue of this kind, which is the gift of God and is itself produced."

The text in its entirety is: "From these acts a habit of another kind is not generated by that habit from which the acts are elicited; but *either* some habit of the same character, just as from acts of infused charity some habit of love is generated, or a pre-existing habit is increased: as in him who has the habit of temperance acquired from acts, the habit itself is increased. And thus, since an act of conscience proceeds from the habit of wisdom and science, no other habit is generated from them, but those habits are perfected." He does not say, therefore: "Either those habits are perfected or habits of the same character are generated," which, however, it seems he ought to have said if he had advanced both members of the preceding disjunction as his own opinion.

Article 17. Whether an act of the virtue of Penance proceeds from fear as from its proper motivating principle

ARTICLE XVII. Whether the Act of the Virtue of Penance Proceeds from Fear, as from Its Proper Motivating Principle (q. 85, aa. 5 and 6; IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 2, qq. 1 and 2).

AFFIRMATIVE CONCLUSION.

Proof.

The habit of the virtue of Penance itself does not proceed from the habit of another virtue, since all the virtues are infused by God simultaneously and directly,[234]although, in view of what St. Thomas teaches in the second part of the*Summa Theologiae*[235]concerning the comparison and interdependence of the theological virtues, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the moral virtues, there is on the part of the subject into whom they are infused a certain order in the generation or infusion of these supernatural habits: namely, first in the order of nature the theological virtues are infused; secondly, by reason of them, the gifts; and thirdly, by reason of both, the moral virtues. In this sense the theological virtues can be called principles of the gifts (or the reason why the gifts are infused), and

the theological virtues and gifts principles of the moral virtues; and in particular charity can be said to be the principle of the gift of fear, and both to be principles of the habit of Penance.

[234] Question 85, articles 5 and 6.

[235] Compare I–II, q. 19, a. 9, ad 3 and 4; II–II, q. 68, a. 4, ad 3; a. 5; a. 8.

Properly speaking, however—that is, considering the relation of a principle influencing something else—we must consider the order of principle and thing proceeding from it among the acts of virtues, which also succeed one another in time. We must not suppose, however, that one act can be the elicitive principle of another, for an act is elicited by its own habit; rather, one act can be the motivating and, as it were, commanding principle of another.

Among the acts that dispose the sinner for justification and thus lead to the act of Penance itself, which is the final disposition for justification, we must distinguish the order of priority and posteriority from the order of principality or influence: not every act that precedes another is necessarily and properly a principle influencing it; it may be merely a prerequisite of some kind.

IF, THEREFORE, WE CONSIDER THE ORDER,[236] the first is the movement of God, or operative and prevenient actual grace; the second is a movement of reason; the third is a movement of the will which, according to different motives for fleeing evil and pursuing good—the proper objects of the appetite—is divided and ordered into several acts: servile fear, hope, charity, filial fear, and Penance.

[236] On the order among the virtues, see also article 19.

St. Thomas explains the matter, and the Council of Trent follows him almost word for word[237] (session 6, chapter 6): "We can speak of Penance with respect to the acts by which we cooperate with God operating in Penance. Of these acts, the first principle is the operation of God converting the heart, according to the words of the last chapter of Lamentations, verse 21: 'Convert us, O Lord, to thee, and we shall be converted'; the second act is the movement of faith; the third is a movement of servile fear, by which a person is drawn back from sins through fear of punishments; the fourth act is a movement of hope, by which, under the hope of obtaining pardon, a person undertakes the purpose of amendment; the fifth act is a movement of charity, by which sin becomes displeasing to someone in itself, and no longer on account of punishments; the sixth act is a movement of filial fear, by which, out of reverence for God, a person voluntarily offers amendment to God" (q. 85, a. 5; cf. *IV Sentences*, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 2, q. 2).

[237] There is, however, this difference: the Council directly considers the beginning of, or preparation for, justification and stops at the act of attrition; it omits mention of charity and filial fear, substituting for them initial love, by which the sinner begins to love God as the source of justice. Compare what is said toward the end of the present article (pp. 447– 448).

All the aforesaid acts do not necessarily precede the act of Penance as formal and distinct acts; rather, it is sufficient and necessary that they be present virtually, especially as contained eminently within the act of charity, from which the act of Penance that justifies proceeds. The act of charity must indeed exist formally in order that the act of Penance can be elicited; indeed, without a formal act of charity a man cannot be justified, according to God's ordained power, although he can be justified without a formal act of Penance through charity alone. The other acts, however, are more commonly present according to the manner of divine Providence, which leads the imperfect toward the perfect by stages and according to the connatural order of the objects of acts or dispositions of men. Yet they

are not always present, since a person can be moved to Penance by various motives, for example immediately by the motive of love and divine goodness rather than by fear and consideration of punishments, and can be impelled to flee evil by the desire of good rather than to desire good by fear of evil (*IV Sentences*, loc. cit.).

BUT IF WE CONSIDER THE NATURE OF THE PRINCIPLE EXERCISING AN INFLUENCE upon the act of Penance, we must distinguish two kinds of principle. One is a principle influencing efficiently: thus the first principle of the act of Penance is the movement of God or operative grace (no less than in the case of the other acts preceding the act of Penance), while the proximate and elicitive principle is the habit of Penance itself. The other kind is a principle influencing objectively and by way of a final cause, which is properly called a motive. Thus, although any act preceding the act of Penance can be its principle (for a person can be impelled to repent by a motive of fear or of avoiding punishment, or by a motive of hope or of attaining beatitude, or by a motive of love or of pleasing God, so that through intending this end—avoiding punishment, attaining beatitude, or pleasing God—he chooses the means that is repentance), nevertheless St. Thomas rightly says that fear is the proper principle or motive of Penance (or "a movement of affection ordered to this"): servile fear is the remote principle, while filial fear is the proximate principle.

This is evident both on the part of the subject, that is, the man corrupted by sin, and on the part of the object, that is, from the proper character of the act of Penance as compared with the character of the other acts that precede it.

"For since Penance is a withdrawal from sin, as Damascene says in *On the Orthodox Faith*, book II, chapter 30, its origin within us must be understood according to the disposition of one who exists in sin. But one who is in sin does not have a sound taste, so that he may be withdrawn from sin by the sweetness of divine goodness; rather, his affection is infected by disordered self-love. Therefore he is withdrawn from sin by punishments contrary to his nature and will, as the Philosopher says of such persons in book X of the *Ethics*, chapter 1, that 'they pursue their own pleasures and flee the opposite pains; but they have neither an understanding nor a taste of what is good and truly delightful.' Hence, in such persons Penance begins, for the most part, from fear, although in some it also begins from love" (*IV Sentences*, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 2, q. 1).

Moreover, *the act of Penance itself consists in withdrawing from sin and offering God compensation or amendment for sin*. Thus withdrawing from sin is, as it were, the first element of Penance insofar as it is an act of flight, whereas offering amendment is its last and formal element insofar as it is an act of pursuit; consequently sorrow for sin is intended by the penitent in no other way than as making amends (cf. what was said in article 14). Now a man is more directly impelled to withdraw from sin by fear of punishment, since fear is formally an act of flight (*IV Sentences*, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 2, q. 3). But he is more directly impelled to offer amendment by filial fear, both because this fear regards the excellence of the offended person, who ought to be appeased by some amendment, and because, being filial, that is, proceeding from charity, it presupposes the proper sorrow of charity, and in this sorrow considers the relation of sorrowful amendment in which the formal character of the act of Penance consists.

The other acts, however, have a less direct relation to the proper character of Penance, and therefore are less properly and directly motives of this act, even when in fact they generate it. For the act of faith is an act of cognition, whereas Penance is an act of appetite; the act of hope is an act of pursuit with beatitude as its object, whereas Penance is an act of flight regarding sin itself. Hence hope

directly impels a person to the purpose of avoiding sin as adverse to beatitude rather than to the preceding act of Penance, which is sorrow for past sin; or it likewise impels him to undertake the purpose of amendment rather than to amendment itself;[238]the act of charity directly impels one to hatred of, and sorrow for, sin, but does not immediately regard the very character of amendment which is found in that sorrow and which constitutes most formally the object of the act of Penance.

[238] Question 85, a. 5: "The fourth is a movement of hope, whereby, in hope of obtaining pardon, a person assumes the purpose of amendment."

Because of this dependence of Penance upon fear, St. Thomas teaches that fear is in a certain respect the foundation of the spiritual life: "Penance ... and fear, in withdrawing from evil, are foundations in different ways: for fear is first in this whole genus, which is to withdraw from evil; but Penance is first with respect to the species which is to withdraw from evil already committed, and therefore fear also precedes Penance, as the principles of a genus precede the principles of a species" (*IV Sentences*, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 2, q. 3; cf. the entire passage quoted in article 19, p. 461).

What has thus far been said applies principally and in its entirety to contrition, or to the act of Penance as a virtue, which alone has filial fear for its principle; or, if one prefers, it applies generically to an act of Penance, but proportionally and distributively according as the discussion concerns contrition or attrition in particular. *The act of attrition itself*, which is the first penitential movement in the sinner who is to be justified, is elicited not by the virtue of Penance but by the will itself under the assistance of actual grace. It is preceded by an act of faith and hope (which is elicited by the infused habits of faith and hope in a sinner who has lost sanctifying grace, or by the will under actual grace in a sinner who has not previously had sanctifying grace), and has the act of servile fear for its proximate and sole principle, as happens for the most part and in the manner explained above. Attrition, moreover, since it is not exclusively prompted by fear, can also be preceded by an explicit act of initial love (following the act of hope), whereby sinners begin "to love God as the source of all justice";[239]but since "that love is not charity,"[240]it does not generate any filial fear that could be the proximate principle of attrition.

[239] Council of Trent, session 6, chapter 6; cf. St. Thomas, IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 2, q. 2.

[240] St. Thomas, ibid.

Hence the whole sequence of acts leading to justification is as follows: an act of faith (proceeding from an unformed habit, or from the will under the assistance of actual grace alone); an act of servile fear (the principle of an act of Penance, and indeed the proximate principle of attrition itself); an act of hope (proceeding in the same way as the act of faith); an act of imperfect love of God as the source of justice; an act of attrition (sufficient for justification together with the sacrament); an act of infused charity; an act of filial fear; an act of contrition; justification. Of these, in the order of material cause, or of disposition, the act of contrition precedes the act of charity, because it disposes for justification, or for the infusion of grace and charity and the other infused virtues, among which is Penance itself, from which contrition proceeds efficiently.

Article 18. Whether the virtue of Penance contributes to the removal of sin in the order of moral efficient causality

ARTICLE XVIII. Whether the Virtue of Penance Influences the Removal of Sin as a Moral Efficient Cause (q. 85, a. 2, ad 3; *IV Sentences*, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, q. 3, ad 1; q. 2, a. 1, q. 1).[241]

STATE OF THE QUESTION.

The question concerns the efficacy of Penance, which is its influence and effect.

[241] We cited these texts in article 12, pp. 315 ff.

This question can be reduced to the more general question concerning the end of Penance, since an effect in execution is an end in intention, and the influence of an efficient cause coincides materially with the influence of a final cause. As was said in the Introduction to this chapter, discussion of the effect itself of Penance, or the removal of sins, is more suitably deferred to Chapter VIII on the effect of the sacrament, which almost coincides with the effect of the virtue. Hence here we consider only the influence of Penance itself in the removal of sin, the nature of which is not difficult to establish from what we laid down above (article 14, pp. 370–374) concerning the satisfactory character of an act of Penance in relation to sin.

The following points, almost universally admitted by theologians, must be presupposed as so many doctrinal principles. The virtue of Penance, like every habit, exercises efficient influence upon its proper act; it formally, or in the order of formal causality, expels its proper contrary, namely impenitence (*IV Sentences*, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, q. 3, ad 1), just as every virtue does. Penance itself, by reason of the sanctifying grace with which it is infused, but not by reason of itself or of its own act, namely contrition, expels sin itself in the order of formal causality;[242]the act of contrition is a disposition—and indeed a physical one[243]—toward justification or the destruction of sin. Consequently the virtue of Penance, through its act, has a physically dispositive influence upon the destruction of sin.

[242] A few dissent, however, among them Vázquez, who teach that the act of contrition is the sanctifying form itself. This is refuted by the Thomists in the treatise On Grace.

[243] Suárez, at the place cited below, holds that the act of contrition is only a moral disposition.

The question, however, is whether Penance, through the act of contrition, influences the destruction of sin: (1) not only dispositively but also in the order of efficient causality; and (2) not physically, however, but only morally.

NEGATIVE AND AFFIRMATIVE POSITIONS.

1. Some, such as Scotus (*IV Sentences*, dist. 14, q. 2, a. 2), Vázquez (on q. 85, a. 2), and Suárez (disp. 8, sect. 3), attribute to the act of contrition only the character of a disposition toward the destruction of sin, denying it every efficient influence.

2. Others, chiefly among the Thomists, following St. Thomas (in the three places mentioned in the text of the article), teach that the act of Penance also influences efficiently. They are divided on the nature of that influence. Some, such as Soto (*IV Sentences*, dist. 13, q. 2; dist. 15, q. 1), Nuño, and Prado, teach that this influence is physical; others, such as John of St. Thomas (on q. 85, a. 2), Gonet (disp. 3, a. 4), and the Salmanticenses (disp. 6, dub. 2), teach that this

influence is only moral. St. Thomas clearly favours the latter (in the third of the aforesaid passages).

CONCLUSION.

The virtue of Penance, and it alone, through its proper act, influences the removal of sin not only dispositively, or in the order of material causality, but also efficiently, or in the order of efficient causality; not physically, however, but only morally.

Proof of the first part (that Penance influences efficiently).

The act of contrition is not only a physical disposition toward justification, or the removal of the stain of sin by the form of grace, as is also the act of charity which precedes it; it has in itself the true character of satisfaction for the offense contained in sin (in which it differs from the act of charity and the other virtues), as was explained in article 14 (pp. 370–374). But a satisfactory influence is an efficient influence, and indeed a moral one. Therefore the virtue of Penance, through its proper act of contrition, influences the destruction of sin not only dispositively, toward the removal of sin under the aspect of a stain, but also efficiently and morally, toward the destruction of sin under the aspect of an offense.

The three aforementioned texts of St. Thomas, cited in article 12 (pp. 315 ff.), support the point, and especially the third. From reading these texts and comparing them with one another, it becomes apparent how arbitrary is the exposition that Suárez gives of the first text, that is, q. 85, a. 2, ad 3: "From this testimony, as I have already said above, I think he is speaking not of contrition, with which we are now dealing, but of the will to make reparation for the injury done to God, which [St. Thomas] called an act of Penance; and insofar as it commands the act of contrition, it is said to concur efficiently in the remission of sin. But if that passage is understood also of contrition, it must be explained according to what has been said here. For, in the first place, if it is understood of physical efficacy, it is to be applied to contrition insofar as it is part of the sacrament; but if it is understood of moral efficacy, it coincides with the disposition, for that which disposes toward the introduction of a form is said in a certain way to bring about the effect of that form, or to expel its contrary. And for this reason the disciples of St. Thomas are accustomed to say that this is said more properly of the penitent himself than of Penance, because a disposition as such does not effect anything; yet he who produces the disposition is said to produce the effect that follows from that disposition. But the penitent brings about Penance, and therefore is said to effect the expulsion of sin. Just as, conversely, the sinner, by sinning mortally, is said by St. Thomas to expel grace efficiently, II–II, q. 24, a. 12, and as Ledesma noted, part 4, q. 27, a. 1. Hence, if we speak of Penance as a habit, insofar as it is the efficient cause of its act, it can also be said to concur efficiently in the expulsion of sin, although this cannot be accommodated to the first justification, since according to the true opinion the first contrition does not proceed from a habit."[244]

[244] In III, q. 86, a. 1, disp. 8, sect. 3, n. 17, Opera omnia, vol. 22, Paris, 1866, p. 147; cf. Commentary on q. 85, a. 2, ad 3, ibid., p. 116.

Proof of the second part (that Penance does not influence physically).

Besides the aforesaid moral influence, the virtue of Penance has no other physically efficient influence upon the destruction of sin. For three aspects can be considered in sin: the character of an actual sin,

which has passed away as to its physical being but remains morally; the stain of sin physically remaining in the soul; and the character of an offense against God. The first and the third cannot be destroyed except through moral influence, as is clear; the second, or the stain, cannot be removed through the physically efficient influence of Penance itself.

For, *first*, when Penance exercises its influence, sin has already been removed formally by grace, from which Penance proceeds. Penance proceeding from grace cannot precede grace in the order of efficient causality, even with reference only to the destruction of sin, although it can precede in the order of material causality, namely, with reference to the infusion of grace itself; for the one cannot precede and follow the other except insofar as they stand to one another as two causes of different kinds. Neither of these would be the case if Penance preceded grace as the efficient cause of the destruction of sin.

Secondly, even if it were granted, contrary to the truth, that an act of Penance influences efficiently by its nature prior to the infusion of grace, or even that the infusion of grace might in some way fail to remove sin, the act of Penance still could not remove it efficiently. For, to be able to do so, it would have to influence physically the production of grace itself, which is the physical form whereby the stain of sin is expelled, since no agent physically expels a form except by physically producing another form incompatible with it. But the act of Penance cannot exert a physically efficient influence on the production of grace, both because grace is in the substance of the soul, whereas Penance is in the will, and especially because the virtue of Penance proceeds efficiently from grace itself and cannot therefore be a cause of its cause in the same order.

Therefore the virtue of Penance does not influence the destruction of sin physically and efficiently, but only morally.

St. Thomas speaks to the point in *Disputed Questions on Truth*, q. 28, a. 8: "Others say that these movements [namely, of formed faith and contrition] are meritorious and are informed by grace, and hence naturally follow grace. Yet they naturally precede the remission of guilt, because through these acts grace effects the remission of guilt [that is, of the stain]. But this cannot be. For *whatever causes something by an operation causes it by way of an efficient cause*. Therefore, if grace causes the remission of guilt through the act of contrition and of formed faith, it will cause it after the manner of an efficient cause, which cannot be. For an efficient cause destroying something is placed in being before that which it destroys is in non-being; for it would not act to destroy that which already does not exist. Hence it would follow that grace was in the soul before guilt had been remitted, which is impossible. It is therefore evident that grace is not the cause of the remission of guilt through any operation, but through the informing of the subject, which is brought about by the infusion of grace and the remission of guilt; and therefore *between the infusion of grace and the remission of guilt* [insofar as guilt is a stain, not insofar as it is an offense] *nothing intervenes*.

"Therefore, according to another opinion, it must be said that the aforesaid movements are related to both in the same order, so that in one way they precede and in another way they follow, according to the order of nature. For if the order of nature is considered according to the character of a material cause, then the movement of free choice naturally precedes the infusion of grace, *as a material disposition precedes a form*. But if it is considered according to the character of a formal cause, the converse holds. And it is similar in natural things with a disposition that is necessary for a form: it in a certain way precedes the substantial form, namely according to the character of a material cause.

For the material disposition belongs to the part of matter; but in another way, namely on the part of the formal cause, the substantial form is prior, insofar as it perfects both the matter and the material accidents."

Considering, therefore, what was said in article 14 (pp. 370–374), the order of causes influencing the destruction of sin is as follows: first, contrition, as a disposition toward the infusion of grace and the destruction of sin as a stain; secondly, the infusion of grace itself, destroying sin as a stain; thirdly, contrition, as the moral efficient cause of the destruction of sin as an offense; fourthly, the total destruction of sin itself under this aspect of an offense.

When these points are rightly weighed, there is no opposition between what we said in article 14 (at the place cited) and what St. Thomas teaches in the passage from *On Truth* quoted above.

REPLIES.

OBJECTION 1 (against the first part of the conclusion). The act of contrition influences the infusion of grace not efficiently but only dispositively; therefore it influences the destruction of the opposite form, or sin, in precisely the same way, since this is destroyed only through the placing of that form.

REPLY. I concede the antecedent and distinguish the consequent: that it influences the destruction of sin in precisely the same way insofar as sin is opposed to the form of grace, or insofar as it is a stain, I concede; insofar as it is morally an offense against God, under which aspect it is not directly opposed to the form of grace, I deny. Since two aspects exist in sin, namely a physical stain and a moral offense, its total destruction requires a twofold influence, one physical for removing the stain, the other moral for removing the offense. Accordingly, the virtue of Penance can concur toward both in different respects, so that it is merely a physical disposition in relation to the destruction of the stain and a moral efficient cause in relation to the destruction of the offense.

OBJECTION 2. The act of contrition cannot have the character of satisfaction in relation to the remission of sin, since it receives the character of satisfaction from grace itself; therefore it presupposes the remission of sin already accomplished through grace itself. Thus Suárez (loc. cit., n. 16).

REPLY. We resolved this argument above in article 14 (pp. 370–374).

OBJECTION 3. St. Thomas, *Disputed Questions on Truth*, q. 28, a. 8, ad 2, explicitly excludes from the act of contrition every character of an efficient cause in relation to the destruction of sin itself, and grants contrition this character only insofar as it is united to the sacrament, or in relation solely to the remission of temporal punishment. On the matter itself he says: "The sacrament of Penance has to confer grace by virtue of the keys to which the penitent subjects himself. Contrition, therefore, if considered in itself, is not related to grace except by way of disposition; but if considered insofar as it has the power of the keys in desire, it acts sacramentally by the power of the sacrament of Penance, just as also by the power of Baptism, as is apparent in an adult who has the sacrament of Baptism only in desire. From this, therefore, it is not established that contrition is the efficient cause of the remission of guilt, speaking in itself, but the power of the keys or Baptism. Or it can be said that contrition, in relation to the remission of guilt insofar as regards the liability to temporal punishment, is related after the manner of an efficient cause; but with respect to the stain and the liability to eternal punishment it is related only after the manner of a disposition."

REPLY. In the three passages mentioned from the *Summa* and the *Commentary on the Sentences*, the Holy Doctor explicitly attributes to the act of Penance an efficient influence in the destruction of sin; indeed, in the third passage from the *Commentary on the Sentences* he assigns the very character and manner by which that influence is efficient and operative, namely that it offers satisfaction for sin insofar as it is an offense. What then? Did St. Thomas, writing the *Disputed Questions on Truth*, change a doctrine already expressed in the *Commentary*, only to return to it later in the *Summa Theologiae*? There are indeed those who have asserted this so as conveniently to escape the present difficulty. Yet the very wording of the passage adduced by no means compels us to invent such a double retraction. For St. Thomas is not there attending to the very character of offense in sin, or to sin as it stands on the part of God, but only to the character of a stain and of eternal punishment,[245]or to sin as it stands on the part of the sinner and insofar as it is removed through the infusion of grace itself, as is clear from the title of the article and the development of its body, cited above. Thus he most rightly teaches that contrition is related not efficiently but only dispositively to the remission of guilt and the infusion of grace.

[245] According to St. Thomas, punishment is due to sin not insofar as it is an offense, but insofar as it is a turning away from God (in this respect eternal punishment is due) and a turning toward a creature (in this respect the punishment of sense, which is finite, is due); cf. I–II, q. 87, a. 4; IV Sentences, dist. 46, q. 1, a. 3, ad 6.

OBJECTION 4 (against the second part of the conclusion). The act of contrition is a certain physical and vital act, really and actively withdrawing from sin. Therefore nothing prevents it from being said to destroy sin actively and physically by its very presence and exercise.

REPLY. From the antecedent it follows only that the act of contrition expels from the will itself (formally rather than efficiently) an act of affection for sin that is directly contrary to the act of contrition, but not the stain of sin itself, as we proved in the conclusion and heard confirmed by St. Thomas.

OBJECTION 5. An act of sin existing in the will physically and efficiently expels the form of grace from the soul. Therefore conversely the act of contrition existing in the will can expel the form of sin from the soul according to the same manner of causality.

REPLY. I concede the antecedent, but deny the consequent and the parallel. For sin does not proceed from a cause which already presupposes grace to have been removed, but is the first act contrary to grace, proceeding immediately from the natural will itself, and first introduces a physical form incompatible with grace, namely the will's turning away from God as the ultimate end. From this follows the expulsion of grace from the very essence of the soul, since grace is the necessary and inseparable foundation of conversion toward God in the will itself. For when this spiritual edifice is destroyed, its very foundation, grace, inseparably connected with it, falls with it, just as when the trunk of a tree is torn away the root which was most firmly joined to the trunk is also pulled out. By contrast, the act of contrition proceeds neither from the natural will, nor even from the will under the assistance of actual grace, as attrition does, but from sanctifying grace itself, which already formally removes sin of itself. Therefore the act of contrition does not introduce any physical form incompatible with sin, since it cannot exist without sanctifying grace itself.

OBJECTION 6. According to St. Thomas, in *Metaphysics* V, lecture 2, that which efficiently produces the ultimate disposition also efficiently produces the form itself. But the virtue of Penance efficiently

produces the act of contrition, which is the ultimate disposition toward the infusion of grace and the removal of the stain of sin. Therefore these too are efficiently produced by the virtue of Penance.

REPLY. I distinguish the major premise. If the question concerns the ultimate disposition which simply precedes the form, or which does not follow from the form itself, I concede, or let it pass (for in that case the cause of the disposition is not necessarily the proper and direct cause of the form itself, but either is merely the cause of the union of the form with matter, as is apparent in the generation of man, whose form is the immaterial soul; or it is also the cause of the form itself, as commonly happens because the other forms are material and consequently are found in the same order as the dispositions received on the part of matter). If the question concerns the ultimate disposition concomitant with or following the form, or which presupposes that form itself in the order of nature, I subdistinguish: if an agent produces this disposition by its own power, I concede; if it produces it by the power of the form itself, I deny.

I contradict the minor premise: that contrition is the ultimate disposition preceding the form of grace and does not proceed from grace itself, I deny (for prior to grace there is given no proximate disposition, or one calling forth grace infallibly, but all acts, even supernatural ones, elicited under actual grace alone, such as attrition, are dispositions of an inferior order in relation to sanctifying grace and are consequently imperfect and remote dispositions). That it is an ultimate disposition concomitant with or even following the grace which it presupposes, I subdistinguish: that it is a disposition caused by Penance through its own virtue, distinct from the virtue of grace, I deny; that it is caused by Penance through the virtue of the grace itself from which Penance proceeds, I concede.

Hence Penance causes the ultimate disposition toward grace, namely contrition, and nevertheless does not cause grace itself, since contrition itself and Penance itself are caused by grace, and nothing can be the cause of its own cause. Grace, therefore, efficiently causes the virtue of Penance, and this efficiently causes its act of contrition, which, on the part of the subject, or insofar as it is an act of free choice elicited under habitual grace, as it were metaphysically turns back upon and flows into grace itself in the capacity of a merely dispositive cause.

OBJECTION 7. St. Thomas, q. 85, a. 2, ad 3, simply and without distinction asserts that the virtue of Penance operates efficiently toward the destruction of sin. Therefore this must be understood of physical efficacy, for this alone is efficacy simply so called, while moral causality is causality in a qualified sense; and for this reason Thomists understand in a physical sense the words of the same Holy Doctor concerning the causality of the sacraments and the humanity of Christ.

REPLY. When efficient causality is spoken of absolutely, it is to be understood in a physical sense unless a moral sense is required by the subject matter in question, as happens in the present case but not with respect to the sacraments and the humanity of Christ. Moreover, St. Thomas not only attributes causality absolutely to the sacraments and the humanity of Christ, but speaks about it in such a way that Thomists are rightly convinced that he is speaking of physical causality. Conversely, the Holy Doctor shows that the causality of Penance in the remission of sin is moral when he says that it consists in offering God compensation for an offense (cf. the third of the texts cited above, namely *IV Sentences*, dist. 14, q. 2, a. 1, q. 1, cited on pp. 315 ff.).

Article 19. Whether a certain peculiar excellence among the other virtues belongs to the virtue of Penance

ARTICLE XIX. Whether a Certain Peculiar Excellence Belongs to the Virtue of Penance Among the Other Virtues (q. 84, a. 5, ad 2; q. 85, a. 2, ad 2; a. 3, ad 4; a. 6, body and ad 3; IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 2, qq. 2 and 3).

CONCLUSION. Affirmative.

Proof.

From what has been discussed thus far, especially concerning the nature of Penance and its distinction from the other virtues, it is manifest that certain peculiar grounds of excellence belong to it. These may conveniently be reduced to four headings, namely, the excellence of dignity, priority, universality, and necessity. It will be useful to explain them individually.

FIRST. ON THE EXCELLENCE OF DIGNITY OR PERFECTION.

This concerns the very essence of the virtue, and must be drawn from its object: both from the material object, from which perfection in a certain respect is estimated, and especially from the formal object, from which perfection simply speaking is derived.

Now, if the material object of Penance is considered, which is personal sin to be destroyed or shunned, this virtue is inferior in a certain respect to all other virtues. For, insofar as it consists in drawing back from evil, it must itself be counted among the imperfect virtues, no less than fortitude and temperance, while the nature of virtue is to pursue good. Insofar, moreover, as it regards the personal sin of its own subject, unlike all other virtues it has associated with it a new imperfection in the order of virtue, the reason for which is to render the subject perfect (cf. above, pp. 320 ff.). Accordingly, theologians generally exclude this virtue from the soul of Christ; indeed, certain theologians, moved by these reasons to an excessive degree, have denied that Penance itself has the nature of a true and distinct virtue, as was said in Article XII (cf. the opinions of Durandus and Cajetan, and the replies to objections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and especially 12).

But if the formal object of this virtue is considered, it is indeed absolutely inferior to the theological virtues, but absolutely superior to the other moral virtues, including religion, yet excluding prudence, upon which Penance itself depends as upon the first virtue regulating the whole order of rational morality.

That it is inferior to all the theological virtues is evident from the fact that these have God Himself for their formal object, whereas He is regarded by Penance only as an end—and indeed as an end to whom.[246] Nor does it matter that faith and hope tend toward God under a certain imperfect aspect (namely, that of an obscure and absent object) and do not necessarily presuppose conversion to God as the ultimate end through sanctifying grace, as does the virtue of Penance. For those imperfections do not arise from their formal object itself and are therefore imperfections only in a certain respect.

[246] Cf. Article XII, Conclusion IV, pp. 298–299, and Article XIV, Note 1, pp. 381–382.

That the virtue of Penance is superior to moral virtues residing in the sensitive appetite, namely fortitude and temperance, is evident because it has for its object both something closely connected with God as its end, namely compensation for the divine right, and also something belonging to the

rational order, namely an operation,[247] whereas the object of those virtues is referred to God only remotely and regards sensible passions.

[247] Cf. Article XII, Conclusion V, pp. 300 ff., and the reply to Objection 17, pp. 326–329.

That Penance excels justice and the other virtues of the rational appetite, apart from religion, is evident from the fact that its object carries an immediate reference to God as its end. Nor does it matter that it does not attain the perfect character of restoring a right to equality, as justice does; for from this it follows only that Penance (no less than religion itself) is imperfect in the character of justice, but not in the character of virtue.

Furthermore, even according to the very character of justice, which has as its object another person's right to be compensated and fulfilled by two elements, namely a rigorous debt and equal satisfaction, Penance, although it does not attain the perfection of the species of justice itself through lack of equal satisfaction, nonetheless surpasses justice itself both on the part of the divine right, which is supreme and perfectly independent, and on the part of a rigorous debt, which is absolutely such, like the right itself in which it is founded. Indeed, the satisfaction offered by Penance, although deficient on God's side and by comparison with the infinite offense, is superabundant and supreme on the part of the man who offers to God a contrite soul and a humbled heart; and the very relation of otherness, although it is nothing on man's part in relation to God, is supreme on God's part in relation to man, since man depends so entirely upon God in the moral and physical order that God depends upon him in no respect, either in His right or in His being.

That Penance excels the very virtue of religion, so that it is absolutely first among the moral virtues of both the sensitive and rational appetites, is denied by some, both because religion seems to preserve the divine right in a more excellent manner, namely positively and by rendering good, unlike Penance, which merely shuns and repairs evil; and because St. Thomas appears expressly to teach this when he says that "religion is pre-eminent among the other moral virtues" (II–II, q. 81, a. 6).

Nevertheless, the reason adduced establishes only a certain excellence in religion in a qualified respect, as is evident both because otherwise the other moral virtues as well would be more excellent than Penance, and because, as was said above and not just once, the proper act of Penance is not an act of flight but of pursuit, and its formal object is not sin as something to be fled but as something to be repaired. Now, although abstractly speaking it is better to preserve a right than to repair it, yet simply speaking a greater good is the reparation of an injury done to the divine right through an act of contrition proceeding from the very love of charity than the rendering of honor to God through an act of religion; just as (to illustrate the lesser by the greater), although abstractly speaking it would have been better for Adam to have preserved the divine right by not losing grace through sin than for his fall to be repaired, nevertheless it was an incomparably greater good that this injury to the divine right should be repaired through the infinite satisfaction of Christ than that the divine right should be preserved by Adam; and the grace restored by Christ is simply speaking a greater good than the grace first conferred upon Adam.

The authority of St. Thomas, however, is invoked in vain. For the Holy Doctor affirms only the pre-eminence of religion in relation to the other moral virtues of both the sensitive and rational appetites, about which he had previously spoken in the Second Part of the Summa Theologiae. There he entirely passed over Penance so that he might treat of it in the Third Part, among the questions

concerning the sacrament itself. This is further evident both from the reason why he repeats that religion excels the rest, namely that religion concerns those things that are immediately referred to God (which certainly also belongs to Penance), whereas the other virtues concern things referred to God only mediately; and from the fact that in q. 58, a. 12, the Holy Doctor likewise affirms that "justice is pre-eminent among the other moral virtues," among which he certainly does not intend to include religion (to which he subsequently attributes pre-eminence over the others), and much less prudence, which he calls the principal one among the cardinal virtues in q. 123, a. 12, and I–II, q. 61, a. 2.

Therefore, with other theologians, such as the Salmanticenses (Commentary on q. 85, a. 6) and Suárez (On Religion, tract. 2, book 3, final chapter), it must be said that Penance, by reason of its object, or simply speaking, excels religion.

This is evident, first, from the aforesaid perfection of its act, which is the immediate object of the habit; secondly, from the perfection of its formal object, which is compensation for the divine offense, through which something in a certain manner, or morally, intrinsic to God is attributed to Him by the extinguishing, as far as possible, of an infinite offense which exists on God's side, whereas religion offers to God some good extrinsic to Him, or honor (for honor is in the one honoring, while offense is in the one offended, according to St. Thomas); thirdly, from the more perfect manner of regarding the ultimate end, or God, from which precisely St. Thomas (II–II, q. 81, a. 6, mentioned above) deduces the pre-eminence of religion over the other virtues. For Penance not only regards God immediately as the end for whom, which also belongs to religion by contrast with the other moral virtues, but, for the reason just stated, regards God as intrinsically connoted in the notion of an offense and its compensation (although this does not therefore cause God to pass into the formal object of this virtue, as was said in Article XII, Conclusion IV); fourthly, from the universality of its material object, which, since it is every sin, embraces the matter of all the virtues.

That Penance is nonetheless inferior to prudence, and therefore occupies the fifth place among the virtues and the second among the moral virtues, follows from the fact that its formal object is imperfect in comparison with the object of prudence.

For its object is not God Himself, as was said, but the good of reason, which, since it is man's proper good, is the proper object of every moral virtue. Now the good of reason belongs to prudence essentially and causally, since it can essentially exist only in reason as in its proper subject, and from the influence of reason itself is derived into the appetite, so that the other virtues of both appetites are nothing other than "a certain disposition or form impressed and stamped upon the appetitive power by reason,"[248] or a certain participation and effect of prudence, which is the sole virtue of reason in the order of morality. But what is such by essence excels what is such by participation, and a cause surpasses its effect. Hence prudence excels Penance and the other moral virtues as the source and origin of all morality.

[248] St. Thomas, Disputed Questions on the Virtues in General, a. 9; cf. above, Article XVI, Conclusion IV, p. 438.

To the point St. Thomas, I–II, q. 61, a. 2, body and ad 1: "The number of certain things may be taken either according to formal principles or according to subjects; and in either way four cardinal virtues are found. For the formal principle of virtue, of which we now speak, is the good of reason. This may be considered in two ways: in one way insofar as it consists in the very consideration of reason; and

thus there is one principal virtue, which is called prudence. In another way insofar as an order of reason is placed in something; and this is either concerned with operations, and thus there is justice [to which Penance and religion belong], or with passions, and thus there must be two virtues. . . . Similarly, according to the subjects the same number is found. For there is a fourfold subject of this virtue of which we are speaking, namely the rational by essence, which prudence perfects, and the rational by participation, which is divided into three: that is, the will, which is the subject of justice; the concupiscible appetite, which is the subject of temperance; and the irascible appetite, which is the subject of fortitude. . . . [Hence] prudence is simply the most principal of all, while the others are considered principal, each in its own genus."

II–II, q. 123, a. 12: "As Augustine says [On the Trinity, book VI, chapter 8], 'in things which are not great by size, to be greater is the same as to be better'; hence a virtue is greater according as it is better. Now the good of reason is man's good, according to Dionysius [On the Divine Names, chapter 4, paragraph 4]. Prudence has this good essentially, for it is the perfection of reason; justice, however, produces this good insofar as it belongs to it to establish the order of reason in all human affairs. The other virtues are preservative of this good, insofar as they moderate the passions lest they draw man away from the good of reason. And among these fortitude holds the principal place, because the fear of the dangers of death is especially effective in making man depart from the good of reason. After it temperance is ranked, because the pleasures of touch also, more than other things, hinder the good of reason. But what is said essentially is preferable to what is said effectively, and this also is preferable to what is said preservatively according to the removal of an impediment. Hence among the cardinal virtues prudence is first, justice second, fortitude third, temperance fourth; and after these are the remaining virtues."

Here also, in the Third Part, q. 85, a. 3, ad 4, the Holy Doctor, while treating Penance directly, expresses its relative inferiority to prudence in an equivalent way when he says: "Insofar as [Penance] is a moral virtue, it participates in something of prudence, which is directive of all the moral virtues."

SECOND. ON THE EXCELLENCE OF PRIORITY (q. 85, a. 6).

This regards the existence of the virtue and of its act, and must be derived from the mode in which the habit is infused and the act elicited. St. Thomas, in the present article 6, explicitly and directly considers this character of priority and posteriority among the infused virtues, teaching as follows.

If Penance is compared with other virtues according to the habits themselves, or with respect to the infusion of the habits, there is no priority in time, since all the virtues are infused together at the same instant, although a certain order of nature is given, as was said in Article XVII (p. 444), an order which will presently be drawn from the relation among the acts themselves.

But if the comparison is made between the acts, insofar as the act of one virtue presupposes the act of another, Penance is prior in the order of time to the other moral virtues, because the act of Penance is the first that occurs in the justification of the ungodly, through which the other virtues are introduced together with grace (for the acts which precede contrition—namely the acts of fear, initial love, and attrition—are not properly acts of supernatural virtues but only praiseworthy and supernatural acts elicited under actual grace). It is not, however, prior in time, but simultaneous with the theological virtues, since contrition itself proceeds from an act of charity, or from an act of faith and hope informed by charity (indeed Penance is posterior to unformed faith and hope).

In the order of nature, however, Penance is posterior both to the theological virtues, for in the justification of the ungodly the act of free choice directed toward sin, or contrition, is posterior to the act of free choice directed toward God, or to an act of faith informed by charity, since it proceeds from this; and also to the moral virtues, because "what is per se is prior to what is per accidens; . . . the other virtues are seen to be necessary per se for man's good, whereas Penance presupposes something, namely a pre-existing sin, just as was also said (q. 65, a. 2, body and ad 4) concerning the order of the sacrament of Penance relative to the other sacraments mentioned."

By reason of the aforesaid priority in time, Penance can be called the foundation of the spiritual life.

St. Thomas, adducing the words of the Apostle in Hebrews 6:1, "not laying again the foundation of penance from dead works," explains them thus: "A foundation is the first part of a building. But the first thing in spiritual building is to destroy the building of Satan, which Penance does. Therefore Penance is a foundation." Then, setting up a comparison among the different virtues called foundations, the Holy Doctor continues: "Something is called a foundation in spiritual things by likeness to a bodily foundation, which has two properties. The first is that it is itself the first part of the building; the other is that the whole building is sustained by the foundation. Therefore in spiritual things something is called a foundation either by reason of priority, or by reason of the preservation and support of other things, or even by reason of both. Priority is considered in two ways. In one way with respect to spiritual instruction, and thus the things that first present themselves to be taught in the Christian religion are called the foundation, Hebrews 6. In another way with respect to the spiritual life, and thus faith is called simply the first foundation; but fear and Penance are foundations in the class of those things which belong to the affections as regards withdrawal from evil, whereas charity is a foundation as regards pursuit of good, according to Ephesians 3:17, 'rooted and founded in charity.' But by reason of support, in prosperity humility is called the foundation, and in adversity fortitude. Penance and fear, however, in withdrawing from evil, are foundations in different ways: because fear is first in this whole genus, namely withdrawing from evil; but Penance as regards this species, which is withdrawing from evil already committed; and consequently fear precedes Penance, as the principles of a genus precede the principles of a species" (IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 2, q. 3, objections and solution).

THIRD. ON THE EXCELLENCE OF NECESSITY.

This regards the end, and proceeds from the very influence which Penance has in justification, through which the grace that generates all the virtues is produced.

For, as was said in the preceding article, the act of contrition is, at least speaking per se or according to the laws of God's ordained power, a necessary and proximate physical disposition for the infusion of grace, and a necessary morally efficient cause of the destruction of sin under the aspect of offense.

The acts of the other moral virtues, however, do not concur toward those effects; rather, they follow upon justification. The acts of the theological virtues themselves, especially charity, concur only insofar as they are prerequisites for eliciting the act of contrition. Even an act of charity which, by itself alone, would be able to justify in the case where an explicit act of contrition is lacking, would not bring this about except insofar as it virtually contains reparative and satisfactory contrition.

To the point St. Thomas, q. 85, a. 6, ad 3: "Penance opens the way to the virtues by expelling sin through the virtue of faith, hope, and charity, which are naturally prior; yet it opens the way to them

in such a manner that they enter together with it. For in the justification of the ungodly, simultaneously with the movement of free choice toward God and against sin, there is the remission of guilt and the infusion of grace, together with which all the virtues are infused, as was stated in the Second Part (I–II, q. 65, a. 3)."

FOURTH. ON THE EXCELLENCE OF UNIVERSALITY OR GENERALITY (q. 85, a. 2, ad 3; a. 3, ad 4).

Penance is rightly called a certain general virtue, not because it is an aggregation of all the virtues or their general condition, since it is a distinct and specific virtue, but because in its specific nature, influence, and object it in some manner brings together the characteristics, influence, and objects of the other virtues.

And first, Penance displays in its very essence marks of affinity with the other virtues. For insofar as it is immediately referred to God, and indeed more intimately than religion itself, as was said above, it agrees with the theological virtues, although it remains at the threshold of these because it does not have God as its specific object, but only as its immediate end and as intrinsically connoted. Insofar as it is specifically a moral virtue, it bears in itself the stamp of prudence, just as do the other moral virtues. Insofar as it is a certain justice, or an imperfect species in the line of justice, it bears in itself the formal character of justice and is assimilated to its principal analogue as far as it can be. By means of this affinity with justice, however, it assumes also the characters of fortitude and temperance, since it also belongs to justice to endure hardships and abstain from pleasures, which are the proper objects of those virtues.

To the point St. Thomas, q. 85, a. 3, ad 4: "Penance, although it is directly a species of justice, nevertheless in a certain manner comprehends the things which pertain to all the virtues. For insofar as it is a certain justice of man toward God, it must participate in those things which belong to the theological virtues, which have God for their object. Hence Penance is with faith in the Passion of Christ, through which we are justified from sins, and with hope of pardon, and with hatred of vices, which belongs to charity. But insofar as it is a moral virtue, it participates in something of prudence, which directs all the moral virtues. But by the very character of justice it has not only what belongs to justice, but also the things that belong to temperance and fortitude, insofar as the things which cause pleasure, which temperance concerns, or inspire terror, which fortitude moderates, come into the matter of justice. And accordingly it belongs to justice both to abstain from pleasures, which belongs to temperance, and to endure hardships, which belongs to fortitude."

Moreover, Penance in its very influence in some manner brings together the influence of the other virtues, and that passively, actively, and even formally.

Passively, insofar as the act of contrition is required or commanded by the other virtues, and especially by charity. To the point St. Thomas, IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 2, q. 2, ad 5: "The first movement of Penance precedes the movements of the other virtues. But it is not unfitting that the movements of the other virtues should sometimes cause certain movements of Penance; as someone from a love of temperance has a movement of Penance concerning previous lust. For sometimes, too, from a subsequent virtue a movement of the preceding virtue arises; as one is moved to love God, who commands chastity, because chastity pleases him."

Actively also, insofar as the act of contrition, for its own elicitation, antecedently requires the act of the theological virtues, especially charity, and subsequently commands the acts of the virtues already infused, directing them to its proper penitential end, chiefly in the form of sacramental confession, satisfaction for punishments, and the various acts into which the very purpose of sinning no more, included in the act of contrition, is translated in practice. Indeed, it is proper to Penance before the other moral virtues that it require for eliciting its own act an act of the theological virtues, whereas for eliciting the acts of the others the virtue itself and the influence of prudence suffice.

Formally, finally, insofar as Penance in its act of universal detestation of sin brings together in a certain manner every particular hatred of its opposite which is proper to each virtue, and in its own satisfactory and justificatory sorrow fulfills and completes the intimate requirements of the other virtues, which these cannot express, either because they do not possess the capacity or because they cannot attain them by their proper act. For every virtue is intimately opposed to its own expulsion from the subject and, as it were, seeks to be restored to life if it has been extinguished through the destruction of its opposite by a particular sin. Similarly, from the love by which it is borne toward its proper good, every virtue, as it were radically, calls for and implicitly commands the detestation of the contrary sin, even under that universal aspect under which sin cannot be detested by that virtue itself. Furthermore, faith requires that a man seek to be justified from sins through the virtue of Christ's Passion; charity requires that one grieve over an offense committed against a friend; prudence requires that one take counsel for his own salvation; justice requires that a thing disordered through sin be restored to right equilibrium by the compensation of contrition; mercy requires that one come to the aid of his own spiritual misery. All these things only the act of Penance can accomplish.

To the point St. Thomas, q. 84, a. 5, ad 2: "From the fact that someone incurs sin, charity, faith, and mercy do not free a man from sin without Penance. For charity requires that a man grieve over the offense committed against a friend and that he strive to make satisfaction to his friend; faith itself also requires that through the virtue of Christ's Passion, which operates in the sacraments of the Church, he seek to be justified from sins; and mercy too requires that a man assist his own misery by repenting, the misery which he incurs through sin, according to Proverbs 14:34: 'Sin makes peoples miserable'; whence it is said in Ecclesiasticus 30:24, 'Have mercy on thy own soul, pleasing God.'"

Moreover, Penance under its own object, which is sin as such, or as an offense against God, brings together in a certain manner the objects of the other virtues, namely on the part of their contraries, or the particular sins in the matter of each virtue. Thus it is a general virtue, having a general, indeed universal, matter, and invading the entire field of morality on its negative side. Charity itself lacks this kind of universality on the positive side of the field of morality, since it can only command, not elicit, acts regarding the proper good of each particular virtue (q. 85, a. 2, ad 2).

Article 20. Whether the virtue of Penance is fittingly divided into three accidental subjective parts, namely, Penance before Baptism, Penance for mortal sins, and Penance for venial sins

ARTICLE XX. Whether the Virtue of Penance Is Fittingly Divided into Three Accidental Subjective Parts, Namely, Penance before Baptism, Penance for Mortal Sins, and Penance for Venial Sins (q. 90, a. 4; IV Sentences, dist. 16, q. 1, a. 2, qq. 1 and 5).

STATE OF THE QUESTION

We are dealing with a certain commonly received division of the virtue of Penance, proposed and explained twice by Augustine (Sermons 351, 2–4, and 352, cited in Article I, p. 121 ff.). Although accidental, this division so attracted the theological attention of St. Thomas that he devoted to it two special articles: one in his Commentary on the Sentences, and the other in the Summa Theologiae; this latter article was the final article of that immortal work and the final teaching of the Holy Doctor, who was soon to die.

CONCLUSION. Affirmative.

Proof 1. From the different purpose of changing one's life, which is "as it were the end of Penance."

St. Thomas, q. 90, a. 4: "For it belongs to Penance that one should detest past sins with the purpose of changing one's life for the better, which is as it were the end of Penance. And because moral things receive their species from their end, as was established in the Second Part (I–II, q. 1, a. 3, and q. 17, aa. 4 and 6), it is fitting that different species of Penance be distinguished according to the different changes which the penitent intends.

"Now the change intended by Penance is threefold. The first is through regeneration into a new life, and this pertains to the Penance which is before Baptism; the second change is through the reformation of a past life which has already been corrupted, and this pertains to Penance for mortal sins after Baptism; the third change is toward a more perfect exercise of life, and this pertains to Penance for venial sins, which are remitted through some fervent act of charity, as was said above (q. 87, aa. 2 and 3)."

Proof 2. From the different condition of the subject who repents.

St. Thomas, IV Sentences, dist. 16, q. 1, a. 2, q. 5: "These parts of Penance are distinguished according to the different ways in which Penance is exercised; hence they are subjective parts of the virtue, not of Penance as a sacrament, although the other two can pertain to Penance according as it is a sacrament. And these modes are taken according to the different state of the penitent; for he is either outside the Church even numerically, and thus there is the first Penance, which is before Baptism; or he is outside it by merit but not numerically, and thus there is the second, which concerns mortal sins; or he is altogether within the Church, and thus the third belongs to him, which concerns venial sins."

This division is not essential, nor can its members be called potential, subjective, or even integral parts of the very essence of the virtue (according to what was said in Article XII, p. 306), because they are taken neither from the formal object, nor from the specific act, nor from the adequate end of this virtue. For satisfaction for an offense against God, the act of contrition, and divine reconciliation are involved in every Penance, both before and after Baptism and concerning mortal as well as venial sins. Rather, it is an accidental division, drawn partly from the material object, or sins, and from the inadequate end, or change of life, and even more directly from the secondary act, or purpose, and from the different state or condition of the penitent subject.

Nor does it matter, therefore, that St. Thomas calls the aforesaid parts subjective parts, or even species of Penance, and adds that species in moral matters are taken from the end. For all these things are also suitably applied and can be said of an accidental element of some virtue, insofar as,

according to the manner of one perfectly divisible whole, it is divided into several quasi-species according to the different manner in which it is referred to some inadequate end. For this reason, perhaps, the Holy Doctor calls the purpose of changing one's life "as it were the end of Penance," so that thereby it may be more readily understood that the aforesaid parts of Penance are not species properly so called but quasi-species, or different modes specifically distinct from one another within the accidental order.

From this, however, the importance of this division is in no way diminished. Although accidental, it approaches the essential division most closely, inasmuch as it is taken principally from the end, from which the species and essence in moral matters are derived. The other accidental divisions which can be assigned to the virtue of Penance—such as formal or virtual Penance, interior or exterior, nonsacramental or sacramental, baptismal or confessional, outside the Church or within the Church —either do not divide the genus equally, or are so accidental and remote from the essence of the virtue that it is not worth considering them directly, since the wise man does not concern himself with accidents.

YOU WILL SAY. The aforesaid division of Penance into three parts is unfitting and illogical, because the third member is not opposed to the first, since even before Baptism there can be Penance for venial sins. Therefore Penance ought to be divided into two members, namely that which precedes Baptism and that which follows it; and again the latter member ought to be subdivided into Penance for mortal sins and Penance for venial sins. Or the division could be made in the reverse manner, namely into Penance for mortal sins and Penance for venial sins, with each of these subdivided into pre-baptismal and post-baptismal Penance.

REPLY. St. Thomas resolves this objection in two ways. First, radically, by denying both that venial sin can occur before Baptism and that venial sin can be remitted without mortal sin. Second, supposing but not conceding the existence or remission of venial sin before Baptism, by denying that venial sin before and after Baptism is on a par with respect to differentiating the state of the penitent. For only after Baptism do one who sins venially and one who sins mortally stand in differently related ways toward the Church, so that the one is outside, and the other within, the mystical body of the Church.

St. Thomas, q. 90, a. 4, ad 3: "Before Baptism there are no venial sins without mortal sins. And because venial sin cannot be remitted without mortal sin, as was said above (q. 87, a. 4), therefore before Baptism Penance for mortal and venial sins is not distinguished."

St. Thomas, IV Sentences, dist. 16, q. 1, a. 2, q. 5, ad 1: "The states of man before Baptism are not diversified by venial and mortal sin as regards belonging or not belonging to the Church; but after Baptism they are diversified by venial and mortal sin, because through a mortal sin committed after Baptism a man comes to be outside the Church by merit, but not through a venial sin; and therefore the reason is not the same."

Suárez, however, does two things. First, he questions the truth of St. Thomas's reply, especially as to the first assumption, namely that venial sin cannot occur before Baptism. Second, as though oppressed by a difficulty, he proposes another interpretation of the passages from Augustine cited above. According to this interpretation, Augustine is speaking of the different modes not of interior but of exterior Penance by which the Church comes to the aid of sinners, namely the discipline of

catechumens, sacramental confession, and the various sacramentals and other aids ordained to the removal of venial sins. This explanation completely evades the teaching of St. Thomas and arbitrarily and ineptly interprets Augustine's thought, who, as is plain from a simple reading of the passages, is treating no other Penance than interior Penance, which is ordered toward a change of life.

Suárez himself, on the matter: "The Divine Thomas replies ... [that] before Baptism there are no venial sins without mortal sins, nor indeed can they be removed without mortal sins. Scotus and others object to this reply, against the second principal assumption. But we have established and shown above that whenever venial sin is joined with mortal sin, it can never be removed, at least according to the ordinary law, without the mortal sin. A greater difficulty lies in the other principle, namely that before Baptism there cannot be venial sin without mortal sin. The reason for doubting this is taken from the Prima Secundae, since it is not necessary that the first sin of a person not baptized who has arrived at the use of reason should be mortal, just as this does not seem necessary in a man already baptized in infancy. But the Divine Thomas would reply to this by denying the assumption. However, one who does not wish to restrict the doctrine to this, since it is truly difficult and rigorous, can say in the present case that it amounts to the same thing whether venial sin is joined to original or to mortal sin, since it cannot be remitted without that sin. And thus it is always removed by the remedy by which mortal or original sin is removed, whether that remedy is Penance or not; and therefore it was not necessary to assign Penance as the remedy for venial sins."[249]

[249] Suárez, Commentary on III, q. 90, a. 4, n. 7, Opera omnia, vol. 22, Paris, 1866, p. 288.

"I think, however, that in explaining the matter more according to the mind of Augustine it must be said that Augustine did not distinguish acts of Penance according to themselves, but the exterior modes of Penance which the Church has instituted or possesses for succoring the sinner. For in themselves and considered apart, Penance for venial and for mortal sins differ little, and are distinguished in that way even before Baptism. ... But if the discussion concerns exterior Penance alone, there can be a difference, because a more serious Penance is required, and is more necessary, for mortal than for venial sins. And all this is true both before Baptism and after Baptism, both in the time of the law of grace and in that of the written law, before or after circumcision, and in the time of the law of nature, before or after the remedy of original sin. And finally, even if there had been no original sin, this mode of distinction would have had a place. Augustine, therefore, was not speaking of this matter, but distinguished three acts or modes of Penance which the Church exercises for different persons. One is for catechumens, whom the Church prepares for Baptism by certain acts of exterior Penance, lest they receive it unworthily. ... Another mode of Penance is for persons already baptized, but spiritually dead. And this Penance properly and of itself consists in sacramental confession and satisfaction. ... The third kind of persons are those who both have been baptized and are just, who are said truly and deservedly to be living members of the Church; and because these more frequently offend venially, lighter remedies have therefore been instituted for them ...; and this is specially called Penance for venial sins. And thus the division is easy, as is the reason why those two members were distinguished by Augustine after Baptism and not before."[250]

[250] Ibid., nn. 9 ff., p. 289.

YOU WILL INSIST. At least venial sin can exist in someone who is justified before Baptism by an act of contrition. Therefore St. Thomas's reply is not correct, and the objection brought against the aforesaid division of Penance into three parts remains in force in the strict sense.

REPLY. Apart from the fact that, in order to solve this insistence, there would still remain the second reason adduced by St. Thomas in his Commentary concerning the difference between venial sin before Baptism and venial sin after Baptism, we say and suppose on the authority of St. Thomas in the Summa that in such a case Baptism has been received not in fact but in desire. For the aforesaid division of Penance into three parts is not formally taken from the order toward the sacrament of Baptism, but from three modes of changing one's life, of which the first, or regeneration into a new life, pertains to Baptism in fact or in desire.

Article 21. Whether Penance ought to be continuous and endure until the end of life

ARTICLE XXI. Whether Penance Ought to Be Continual and to Last Until the End of Life (q. 84, aa. 8 and 9; Supplement, q. 4, aa. 1 and 2; IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 4; dist. 17, q. 2, a. 4).

CONCLUSION. Affirmative.

Proof.

External Penance—whether sensible sorrow commanded by the virtue, or penal satisfaction elicited by the virtue—need not last until the end of life, but only for some determinate time, according to the measure of the sin.

Interior Penance, however, if considered according to the habit, ought to be continual and last until the end of life: both insofar as a man ought to do nothing whereby the habit itself would be expelled through sin, and insofar as he ought to have, in the very disposition of that habit, such a purpose that his past sins shall always be displeasing to him.

But if it is considered according to the act, Penance cannot be continual, since the act of Penance must at least be interrupted by sleep and by other things pertaining to bodily necessity. Nevertheless, it ought to endure until the end of life—not positively, in the sense that one is always bound to elicit a positive act of displeasure, or that one ought to strive to recall sins to mind and consequently detest them (for a man is bound to repent of a sin only once); but negatively, in the sense that one must never elicit an act of complacency in sins. Nor is anyone bound to elicit an actual and positive act of displeasure whenever past sins in fact come to mind, as certain of the ancients taught (for example, Alexander of Hales and Biel). Rather, of itself (that is, unless there is some other danger of complacency which cannot suitably be averted except by eliciting a positive act of displeasure), it suffices that he perform some act whereby complacency in sin is prevented or forestalled—as, for instance, if he positively turns his mind away from the consideration of those sins.[251]

[251] This question is treated at greater length by Cajetan, In q. 84, a. 8; Opuscula, vol. 1, tract. 17 (Lyons, 1563; cf. also the Leonine edition of the Works of St. Thomas, vol. 12, p. 376); Suárez, Disp. 15, sect. 4, nn. 2 ff.; and the Salmanticenses, Commentary on q. 84, a. 9, and Disp. 5, dub. 7, § 4, nn. 283 ff.

Moreover, no one will deny that a positive act of displeasure is, of itself and in most cases, most fitting (unless, that is, the very thought of sin were to introduce a danger of complacency in it, as often happens in matters of chastity), and indeed most fitting even for more perfect souls. This is especially so because, through the renewed purpose not to sin, which is necessarily contained in the act of Penance, the will is drawn farther away from the ready possibility of sinning, which inseparably

accompanies souls still journeying through this life, however perfect they may be (cf. a. 8, ad 2). Hence the frequent exhortations of Scripture to lasting Penance: Psalm 50:3–5: "Have mercy on me, O God ... for my sin is always before me"; Psalm 6:7: "I have laboured in my groanings; every night I will wash my bed; I will water my couch with my tears."

To this point St. Thomas, Supplement, q. 4, a. 1: "In contrition ... there is a twofold sorrow: one of reason, which is the detestation of sin committed by oneself; the other of the sensitive part, which follows from the former. And as regards both, the time of contrition is the whole state of the present life. For as long as a person is in the state of a wayfarer, he detests the impediments by which he is delayed or prevented from reaching the terminus of life. Hence, since by a past sin the course of our life toward God is delayed, because the time which was allotted to running cannot be recovered, it is fitting that the state of contrition should remain throughout the time of this life, as regards the detestation of sin. Likewise, as regards sensible sorrow, which is taken up by the will as a punishment: for since a man by sinning has deserved eternal punishment, and has sinned against the eternal God, then, when eternal punishment has been changed into temporal, at least sorrow ought to remain throughout the whole of man's lifetime, that is, in the state of this life. And for this reason Hugh of St. Victor [rather, the anonymous author of the Summa Sententiarum, ch. 11] says that God, in absolving man from guilt and eternal punishment, binds him with the bond of a perpetual detestation of sin."

YOU WILL SAY 1. Sorrow or sadness belongs to Penance. But we are commanded to cast out sadness even concerning sins, "lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow," according to 2 Corinthians 2:7. Therefore we are commanded to interrupt Penance.

REPLY. "According to the Philosopher [Ethics, II, chapters 3, 6, 7, and 9], it belongs to virtue to hold the mean in the passions. But the sadness which, in the sensitive appetite of the penitent, follows upon the displeasure of the will is a certain passion; hence it must be moderated according to virtue, and its excess is vicious, because it leads to despair. This is what the Apostle signifies when he says in the same passage: 'Lest such a one be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.' And thus the consolation of which the Apostle there speaks is a moderation of sadness, not its total removal."

YOU WILL SAY 2. A man justified from his sins may rejoice in his justice; indeed, he is commanded to rejoice (Philippians 4:4) and to serve the Lord with gladness (Psalm 99:1). But, according to the Philosopher (Ethics, IX, 4), joy excludes the contrary sadness and sorrow, which is the proper act of Penance. Therefore Penance cannot be continual; indeed, instead of repenting anew, one ought rather to turn Penance already performed into an object of joy, since we ought to rejoice in every good work.

REPLY. Joy and sorrow, although they cannot exist simultaneously in the sensitive appetite, because sense is determined to one thing, can exist simultaneously within the universal breadth of the will, provided they do not concern formally the same object, or the same thing under the same aspect. Hence, while a man sorrows over his sins, he can rejoice both over other objects and even over his very sorrow for sin, so that he simultaneously sorrows that he sinned and rejoices that he sorrows for having sinned. For thus the sorrow itself becomes the matter and object of joy.

To the point St. Thomas: "We can speak of sorrow and joy in two ways: in one way, insofar as they are passions of the sensitive appetite; and thus they can in no way exist together, because they are altogether contrary, either on the part of the object (as when they are about the same thing), or at

least on the part of the movement of the heart. For joy is accompanied by a dilation of the heart, whereas sadness is accompanied by a contraction; and in this way the Philosopher speaks.

"In another way we can speak of joy and sadness insofar as they consist in the simple act of the will, to which something is pleasing or displeasing. And according to this they cannot have contrariety except on the part of the object, as when they concern the same thing under the same aspect. And thus joy and sadness cannot exist simultaneously, because the same thing under the same aspect cannot at once be pleasing and displeasing. But if joy and sadness taken in this way do not concern the same thing under the same aspect, but concern either different things, or the same thing under different aspects, then there is no contrariety between joy and sadness; hence nothing prevents a man from rejoicing and grieving at the same time. For example, if we see a just man afflicted, his justice is at once pleasing to us and his affliction displeasing. And in this way a man can at once be displeased that he sinned, and be pleased that this displeases him, with the hope of pardon, so that the very sadness becomes the matter of joy. Hence Augustine [or rather the anonymous author of the book On True and False Penance, ch. 13] says: 'Let the penitent always sorrow, and rejoice over his sorrow.'

"Nevertheless, even if sadness were in no way compatible with joy, this would not remove the habitual continuity of Penance, but only its actual continuity" (a. 9, ad 2; cf. IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 4, q. 2).

Article 22. Whether Penance is necessary with the necessity both of means and of precept

ARTICLE XXII. Whether Penance Is Necessary by Necessity Both of Means and of Precept (q. 84, a. 7, corp. and ad 1; q. 85, a. 1, sed contra; q. 86, a. 2; q. 87, a. 1; I–II, q. 109, a. 8; II–II, q. 14, a. 2; Supplement, q. 6, a. 5, corp. and ad 2 and 3; II Sentences, dist. 43, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3; IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, q. 3, ad 1; q. 2, a. 4, ad 2; dist. 22, q. 2, a. 3, q. 1, ad 2; Quodlibet I, a. 11).[252]

STATE OF THE QUESTION

The discussion concerns the last property of the virtue of Penance (or rather, of its act), drawn from its end.

[252] Cf. Cajetan, Opuscula, vol. 1, tract. 17 (Lyons, 1563; cf. the Leonine edition of the Works of St. Thomas, vol. 12, p. 376 ff.); Salmanticenses, disp. 5, dub. 6 and 7; Billuart, diss. 4, a. 3; Suárez, disp. 9, sect. 1; disp. 15, sects. 1–6; Lugo, disp. 7, sects. 10–13; Würzburg theologians, De Poenitentia, disp. 1, c. 4; St. Alphonsus, De Poenitentia, c. 1, dub. 2, n. 437 (Gaudé edition); Galtier, De Poenitentia, thesis 3.

A twofold question is considered. The first concerns the necessity of means, which is taken in relation to the end of obtaining justification and, consequently, attaining salvation. This necessity is examined here only according to the present order of Providence; for whether, in another order or according to the absolute power of God, an adult man could be justified without a movement of Penance, indeed more generally without any actual disposition on his part, is more suitably discussed in the treatise On Grace (where the dispositions required for justification are considered). The other question concerns the necessity of precept, as regards its existence, character, and time. Here we consider principally the necessity belonging to Penance of itself and by reason of its own nature;

secondarily, however, the necessity belonging to it accidentally and by reason of some other virtue or obligation which cannot be observed unless an act of Penance is performed.

Eight questions, then, are distinctly proposed: 1. Whether Penance is strictly necessary for obtaining justification. 2. Whether it is necessary by necessity of means, so that ignorance or inability does not excuse its omission.

3. Whether it is necessary by necessity of precept, so that there is a formal and distinct precept of repenting.

4. Whether the precept of repentance belongs to divine law not only positive but also natural.

5. Whether this precept obliges of itself immediately after sin has been committed.

6. Whether it obliges of itself at the point of death. 7. Whether it obliges of itself also apart from the point of death, and within some interval of time after sin has been committed.

8. Whether it also obliges accidentally in various other circumstances. Whatever is said here applies principally and directly to the necessity of Penance for justification, or for the remission of mortal sins. For the question of the remission of venial sins will be more suitably treated below, in Chapter VIII, when the effect of the sacrament is discussed.

NEGATIVE AND AFFIRMATIVE POSITIONS

Theological note. That Penance is strictly necessary for justification is a truth of defined faith. That it is necessary by necessity of means, so that ignorance or inability does not excuse its omission, does not seem capable of being denied without temerity.

That there is a distinct precept of Penance does not seem capable of being denied without some temerity, if regard is had to the very common teaching of theologians.

OPINIONS

Regarding the first question, namely, the necessity of the act of Penance for justification, the Protestants are radically opposed, insofar as they teach that contrition, understood in the Catholic sense, is not only unnecessary for justification but actually hinders justification, since it renders a man rather a sinner and a hypocrite; and that the sole act disposing for justification is confidence in Christ (cf. articles 10 and 11).

The defined Catholic faith, however, affirms this in the Council of Trent: Session VI: "They [adults] are disposed for their own justification ... by freely assenting to and cooperating with grace ... God touching the heart of man" (chapter 5). "And so they are disposed ... they are moved against sins by a certain hatred and detestation, that is, by ... repentance" (chapter 6). "Justification itself follows this disposition or preparation" (chapter 7). "Free will ... disposes and prepares itself for obtaining the grace of justification" (canon 4; Denz. 797, 798, 799, 814).

Session XIV: "Penance was indeed necessary for sinners ... at all times, for the attaining of grace and justice" (chapter 1). "Contrition, confession, and satisfaction ... are required by divine institution for the full and perfect remission of sins" (chapter 3 and canon 4). "This movement of contrition has at all times been necessary for obtaining the pardon of sins" (chapter 4; Denz. 894, 896, 897, 914).

Regarding the remaining questions, there are only two notable disagreements among theologians: namely, as to the time at which the precept of repentance binds—whether immediately after sin, and whether only at the point of death. To both the common opinion answers in the negative, teaching that it binds not immediately but within some period more or less distant from the act of sin, and also apart from the point of death.

Regarding the second question, therefore, all theologians teach that Penance is necessary by necessity of means; indeed, from this they generally deduce the necessity of a precept.

Regarding the third question also, almost all teach that there is a special precept of repentance, distinct from the precepts of the other virtues. Some cite Medina on the negative side (without naming him) (Codex de Poenitentia, q. 4); but Victoria alone is directly and expressly customarily designated by authors after Cano (Relectio de Poenitentia, part 4).

Victoria, then, seems to teach that Penance is necessary only by necessity of means, or that it is a certain established condition whose omission prevents salvation, but whose omission incurs no new sin, in the manner in which grace and other supernatural aids are said to be means of salvation. Some, however, interpret him as meaning that Penance is indeed necessary by necessity of precept, yet without implying a special precept, but by his confusing it with the precept of other virtues. Some say St. Thomas favours this opinion, II–II, q. 14, a. 2; II Sentences, dist. 43, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3.

Regarding the fourth question, almost all teach that the precept of Penance pertains to divine law, not merely positive but also natural.

Medina nevertheless denies this (Codex de Poenitentia, tract. 1, q. 2, a. 2). Suárez (disp. 15, sect. 3, nn. 3 ff.) and Lugo (disp. 7, sect. 12, nn. 250 ff.) approach his view in part. Seeking to reconcile the two opinions, they distinguish two acts or modes of Penance, one belonging to natural law and the other to positive law. According to Suárez, the intention of making satisfaction belongs to natural law, whereas the act of contrition itself, or such a determinate mode of making satisfaction, belongs to positive law. According to Lugo, only Penance in general, whether implicit or explicit, belongs to natural law, by which it appears to imply that Penance as performed explicitly and determinately through contrition belongs to positive law.

Regarding the fifth question, the common opinion denies that the precept of Penance binds immediately after sin has been committed.

Several of the older theologians, however, affirm this, among whom are cited William of Paris (De Poenitentia, chapter 19), Innocent IV (chapter "Omnis utriusque sexus," De Poenitentia et Remissione), Alexander of Hales (Summa Theologiae, part 4, q. 77, member 4, a. 1; he speaks ambiguously and indeed appears to insinuate the contrary in another place), Bonaventure (IV Sentences, dist. 17, part 2, a. 4, q. 3; it is unclear what he means, since he appears to teach that the said precept binds religious), Thomas of Strasbourg, Major, Biel, Marsilius, St. Antoninus, St. Bernardine of Siena, Peter Soto, and Francis de Lamy, O.S.B. (d. 1711)[253], as well as Peter Collet, C.M. (d. 1770), who defends this view at length and writes:

[253] Francis de Lamy, Lettres théologiques et morales sur quelques sujets importants (Paris, 1708).

"Although scarcely anything certain can be established amid so great a variety of opinions, it may nevertheless now be permissible to conjecture what we should wish to have done one instant before

death, and to have taught others." So he says.

"Conclusion III. ... Some precept of contrition binds when sin occurs to the mind as an offense against God. So Habert.

"Proof. For when a sin returns to the mind as an offense against God, either it is pleasing to the man who committed it—in which case he rejoices in it, and those who so rejoice are evildoers (Proverbs 2:14)—or he regards it with indifferent eyes, or he does not turn his mind to it without some sense of sorrow and displeasure. But without doubt he sins in the first and second hypotheses! For in the first, since he rejoices in wrongdoing, he sins anew with that kind of sin which he applauds in his heart—for example, fornication, if he rejoices in what he shamefully did with the woman; revenge, if he exults that he inflicted grave and inimical punishments, and so forth. In the second, however, as a son despises his father, and a creature his Creator and benefactor in every respect, I do not know by what cause one who suffers an injury from another would tolerate it, as though from a stranger. Therefore the sinner, if he detests these evils as he ought, must immediately and as soon as he remembers that he sinned against God be imperfectly contrite. And this at least the Seraphic Doctor teaches when he writes in IV Sentences, dist. 16, q. 2, that the sinner 'ought to be contrite according to place and time,' namely, whenever his mind attends to the fact that he offends God."

"Conclusion IV. Everyone who is solicitous for his salvation ought in practice to follow the former opinion and counsel others to do likewise, namely, the opinion which holds that the precept of contrition binds immediately and that its act can be elicited at once.

"Proof. In a doubtful and controversial matter it is preferable to follow that opinion which presents no danger, and which cannot be neglected without manifold danger, or at least cannot certainly be neglected without danger. But such is our opinion. (1) It has no danger for the future. He who has resolved, if some fault befall him, especially a grave one, to blot it out promptly before the Lord as soon as he becomes aware of it, is assuredly far from the shadow of danger. (2) The opposite opinion involves numerous dangers, because it allows contrition to be deferred from day to day, to month, even four or five months, indeed to the time of annual confession.

"(1) For it scarcely accords with this counsel of the Holy Spirit, which bears the character of a precept: 'Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day; for His wrath shall come on a sudden, and in the time of vengeance He will destroy thee' (Ecclesiasticus 5:8).

"(2) Neither does it accord with the Fathers, who with one impulse rose up against such postponement of contrition. ...

"(3) Nor does it agree with sound reason, but is assailed by it in many ways, both in the part that regards God—whom such impenitence can neither mock nor contemn nor deprive of the honour due to Him without a new sin —and in the part that regards the sinner. Such an opinion surely counsels him very badly, exposing him to the danger both of losing time and of falling headlong from one sin into another, and even of eternal damnation. Indeed, he incurs this threefold danger who remains undisturbed in the habit of sin."[254]

[254] Peter Collet, De Poenitentia, part 2, chapter 4, sect. 3, nn. 249, 274–276, in Migne, Theologiae Cursus Completus, vol. 22 (Paris, 1841), cols. 220, 226 ff.

Some, such as Suárez (disp. 15, sect. 5, n. 1), also refer Cajetan in favour of this opinion[255]. But the subtle doctrine of the Commentator, unless it is described as complicated, amounts to this: the precept of contrition is, in the first place and of itself, affirmative (that is, obliging one to be contrite), and therefore includes within itself a negative precept (that is, obliging one not to retain hatred of God). In the first manner it binds only at the time when contrition is obligatory, that is, at the point of death and whenever the sacraments are to be administered or received. In the second manner, however, it does indeed bind immediately, yet not in such a way that a new sin is necessarily incurred from its omission, except when the retention of hatred of God consists in some positive act of commission, or in the positive will itself to retain that hatred. Hence, so far as can be understood, Cajetan teaches that the sinner is not bound immediately to be contrite, but is bound immediately not to perform a positive act whereby hatred of God is retained.

[255] Cajetan, Opuscula, vol. 1, tract. 17 (Lyons, 1563); cf. the Leonine edition of the Works of St. Thomas, vol. 12, pp. 376–378.

Regarding the sixth question, all teach that the precept of Penance binds at least at the point of death.

Regarding the seventh question, the more frequent and, among modern theologians, common opinion affirms that the precept of Penance binds of itself even outside the danger of death, within some period that is not long, as morally estimated; so that the omission of contrition beyond such a period constitutes a new and special sin of impenitence. Thus Soto, Cano, Lugo, Peter Ledesma, Nugnus, the Salmanticenses, Juénin, Antoine, Concina, Vitasse, Billuart, and modern theologians generally. In determining the aforesaid interval, however, they hold different views, as will be said in Conclusion 7 (pp. 512–514).

Some of the earlier theologians nevertheless deny this, teaching that the precept of Penance binds of itself only in danger of death. Suárez indeed says that this negative opinion is "the opinion of many," but he cites for it only St. Thomas (unsuitably, as will be shown in Conclusion 7, p. 514), Durandus, Cajetan (in his Summa, under the word "Contrition"), Hadrian VI, Medina, Soto (?), and Navarrus.

Some, such as St. Alphonsus, Suárez, and the Würzburg theologians, propose a reconciliation of the two opinions (although these last actually return to the negative opinion). They teach that the precept of Penance binds during the course of life not of itself but accidentally (St. Alphonsus), or of itself but not by reason of its own nature, rather by reason of the precept of charity (Suárez and the Würzburg theologians).

Suárez proposes this reconciliation with much hesitation, writing: "There remains to be discussed the third manner of determining the time of the obligation in this precept, namely, of itself and by force of that precept alone. On this point I judge that the common opinion [that is, the affirmative one] related at the beginning is probably true, for its foundation is very effective. But, to explain it more fully and to moderate it somewhat (because, as it stands, it seems scarcely suitable for the right ordering of human conduct unless it be limited in some way), it is necessary here to distinguish those three grounds from which we said this obligation could arise. First, as regards the title of justice, I judge that the precept of making satisfaction to God does not bind until danger of death approaches. ... And the same I judge should be said about another ground of this obligation, namely, charity in its own right. But concerning the third ground of this obligation, from charity toward God,

the obligation is more satisfactorily proved. ... For granted that ... love of God above all things may at some time fall under precept before the point of death, the same must be said of contrition, at least by reason of the necessity of loving God itself, since one who is in mortal sin cannot, when the time arrives for loving God above all things, exercise this love, speaking of it in itself, unless he also has contrition for sins."[256]

[256] Suárez, De Poenitentia, disp. 15, sect. 6, nn. 16–19, Opera omnia, vol. 22 (Paris, 1866), pp. 331 ff.

The Würzburg theologians present the same opinion of Suárez more straightforwardly, writing: "A grave sinner is bound by precept not to put off Penance until the point of death; although this precept does not seem to bind except by reason of charity. ... For he cannot ... at the due time observe the precept of loving God, speaking of him as a sinner, unless he elicits contrition for sins; therefore, by reason of the precept of the charity of God, no one may postpone Penance until the point of death."[257]

[257] Würzburg theologians, Theologia dogmatica, vol. 10, De Poenitentia, disp. 1, c. 4, a. 2, n. 5 (Paris, 1880), p. 75 ff.

St. Alphonsus presents the matter still more straightforwardly, speaking of an accidental obligation: "I think that these opinions can easily be reconciled. — Speaking of itself, the sinner who puts off Penance outside the danger of death probably does not commit a special sin, according to the second opinion. The reason by which the precept of the affirmative opinion is inferred, as St. Thomas teaches [IV Sentences, dist. 17, q. 3, a. 1, q. 4], must have a determinate time in which it is to be fulfilled; but it is by no means established what determinate time there is for fulfilling this precept of contrition. Hence the Holy Doctor [II–II, q. 14, a. 2] said that final impenitence is not a special sin, in these words: 'Impenitence, not indeed in the sense in which it signifies persistence in sin until death ... is not a special sin, but a certain circumstance of sin,' etc. This, however, must be understood apart from the positive precept: for by the precept of annual confession prescribed by the Church, everyone is undoubtedly bound to repent at least once in the year. This is speaking of itself. — But accidentally, I think that a man who is in mortal sin can in no way be excused from mortal sin if he puts off Penance for a considerable time. First, because he sins against the precept of charity toward God, which obliges everyone at least several times during the year. ... Next, because he would moreover sin against charity toward himself, since he would expose himself to a proximate danger of new faults by succumbing to temptations."[258]

[258] St. Alphonsus, Theologia moralis (L. Gaudé ed.), vol. 3, n. 437 (Rome, 1909), p. 434.

Regarding the eighth question, all theologians teach that the precept of Penance binds accidentally in various circumstances, although they disagree to some extent in assigning the particular instances of such urgency.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion I. Penance is strictly necessary for obtaining justification (q. 86, a. 2).

Proof 1. FROM SCRIPTURE AND THE FATHERS.

The Scripture of both Testaments establishes this truth both implicitly, by constantly and insistently presenting Penance as the means of obtaining justification, and explicitly, by asserting that whoever does not repent cannot attain justification. Invitations to Penance frequently occur, as do threats and rebukes addressed to those unwilling to hear the voice of God and to practise Penance. This necessity

of Penance is also made most manifest by the fact that John the Baptist, Christ, and the Apostles began their ministry with the preaching of Penance.

We have cited many texts in Articles X, XI, and XVI (pp. 265 ff., 269 ff., and 412 ff.). It is said particularly in Luke 13:3: "Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish"; in Apocalypse 2:5: "Do penance, therefore, and do the first works. Or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou do penance"; and in Ecclesiasticus 2:22: "If we do not penance, we shall fall into the hands of the Lord."

The Fathers continually preach the necessity of Penance for salvation, as is evident even from the passages quoted above in Article I. It is worth noting the striking expressions by which they describe the sacrament of Penance as "the second plank of salvation," "laborious or second Baptism" (passim), "the last hope," and "the second remedy" (Tertullian). Among the more explicit testimonies it will suffice to recall the following:

Tertullian, On Penance, 2: "A good deed makes God a debtor, as does an evil deed; for the Judge is the requiter of every cause. But since God, as Judge, presides over justice, which is most dear to Him and must be exacted and maintained, and has made the whole sum of His discipline depend upon it, is it to be doubted that, as in all our acts, so also in the matter of Penance, justice must be rendered to God?" (PL 1, 1340 ff.).

Ibid., 4, cited in Article XI, p. 270. Ibid., 6: "How foolish, indeed, how unjust, not to perform Penance and yet to expect the pardon of sins: that is, to refuse to pay the price and nevertheless to stretch forth the hand for the merchandise! For the Lord has established that pardon should be granted at this price; He proposes that freedom from punishment be redeemed through this compensation of Penance" (ibid., 1347).

Ibid.: "The sinner ought to blot out his sin before receiving pardon, because the time of Penance is the time of danger and fear. Nor, therefore, do I think that the divine benefit, namely the abolition of offenses, is in every way secured to the guilty who are approaching the water; but one must labour so as to attain to it" (ibid., 1348).

Cyprian, On the Lapsed, 34: "Flee such men [the obstinate] as far as you can. ... [There] remains only the Penance that makes satisfaction; but those who take away Penance for a crime close the way to satisfaction. Thus it comes about that, while salvation is promised through the rashness of some men, the hope of true salvation is taken away" (PL 4, 506 ff.).

Ambrose, Letter 51 (to the Emperor Theodosius), 11: "Sin is not removed except through tears and Penance" (PL 16, 1212).

Augustine, On Psalm 30, exposition 2, 5: "There is a certain useful temporal confusion, the disturbance of a soul looking back upon its sins. ... The Christian does not dread this confusion; indeed, if he has not had it, he will have it eternally" (PL 36, 232 ff.).

Letter 185 (On the Correction of the Donatists), 10, 43: "Unless you do [Penance], you cannot be saved: for how will you rejoice at being corrected unless you grieve at having been perverse?" (PL 33, 811).

Gregory the Great, Homilies on the Gospels, homily 20, 7, commenting magnificently on the preaching of Penance by John the Baptist, says: "The wrath that is to come is the punishment of

outward vengeance; a sinner cannot then flee it if he does not now have recourse to the lamentations of Penance" (PL 76, 1163).

Proof 2. FROM REASON.

Penance is demanded by the order of justice: through penitential conversion to God, the offense committed by an undue turning away from Him and a turning toward a creature is repaired (cf. Tertullian, On Penance, 2, just cited).

Moreover, Penance is demanded by the right order of divine providence. For, first, God moves all things according to their respective conditions; accordingly, He does not call adults to salvation without their cooperation, insofar as they are able to cooperate, and, in the case of sin, their cooperation consists in the reconversion of their will, which lies in an act of Penance. Secondly, in supernatural effects God imitates the mode of action of natural causes, which He Himself wisely established; therefore, whatever might be said of His absolute power to justify a man without an act of contrition (a subject treated in On Grace), He does not introduce into man the form of saving grace, by which sin is expelled, unless there is a fitting disposition; and this proximate disposition can be none other than an act of Penance, as was said in Article X (pp. 266 ff.), where we cited St. Thomas, q. 86, a. 2, whose meaning is determined in the treatise On Grace.

Conclusion II. Penance is necessary for salvation by necessity of means, so that ignorance or inability does not excuse its omission (q. 87, a. 1; IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 2, a. 4, ad 2).

This is proved both by the absolute manner in which the necessity of Penance is proclaimed in the Scripture and Fathers cited above—for the necessity of means is likewise deduced concerning Baptism[259], without which, as without Penance, man is said to be unable to attain salvation—and by the nature of the thing said to be necessary: Penance is by its own nature a certain requisite disposition, and hence a certain means, for justification; indeed, in this respect Penance precedes Baptism itself, which is a means to justification only by positive institution.

[259] Cf. the treatise On Baptism, art. 9.

YOU WILL SAY. If Penance were necessary for justification by necessity of means, sin could not be remitted without Penance. Yet, according to the Fathers, especially Chrysostom (On 2 Corinthians, homily 4), Augustine (Against Cresconius, 2, 12, 15), and particularly Origen (On Leviticus, homily 2, 4; cited on p. 111), there are various means other than the virtue of Penance for obtaining the remission of sins: namely, the sacrament of Penance, Baptism, Extreme Unction, martyrdom, charity (Luke 7:47; 1 Peter 4:8), the forgiveness of injuries (Matthew 6:14), fraternal correction (James 5:5), almsgiving (Tobias 4:7; Daniel 4:24; Luke 11:41), and the word of truth (John 15:5).

REPLY. All these are means of obtaining the remission of sins, not by themselves alone but insofar as they are joined to Penance, which is their disposition, as is the case with the sacraments of Penance, Baptism, Extreme Unction, and martyrdom, which act ex opere operato; or whose disposition itself is what operates, as is the case with the rest, which are works of the person leading to Penance. Charity itself, which, as we shall presently explain, can supply the formal act of Penance just as it can supply the sacraments of the dead, has no influence upon justification except insofar as it contains Penance virtually and the sacrament in desire.

What is properly the immediate disposition for justification is Penance; and therefore no other virtue whatsoever (or means instituted by God) has an influence upon justification unless it is joined to Penance. St. Thomas says, IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 2, a. 4, ad 2: "Not every virtue is informed by grace, nor does every virtue have an act ordered toward restoring the aforesaid equality between God and man ...; and therefore it does not follow that every virtue remits sins. For this belongs to Penance not insofar as it is a virtue simply, but insofar as it is a particular virtue."

YOU WILL INSIST. The sacraments of Baptism and Penance justify with attrition alone; yet contrition alone, not attrition, is an act of the virtue of Penance. Therefore at least an act of the virtue of Penance is not necessary for justification.

REPLY. I concede the major and minor premises; I deny the conclusion. For the necessity of an act of the virtue of Penance, or of contrition, belongs to it in itself and absolutely, whereas the efficacy of the sacraments of Baptism and Penance is accidental and depends on positive divine institution. Hence, even granting this institution, by which a man is justified without contrition upon receiving those sacraments, it still stands that an act of contrition is in itself and absolutely necessary for justification, apart from the exception of sacramental justification. Indeed, this most efficacious influence of the sacraments, far from opposing the necessity of contrition, was instituted by God as an aid to it: namely, so that the effect toward which contrition itself is ordered and which contrition itself demands might be more easily obtained, in such a way that contrition may be said to effect justification either through itself or through the sacrament, although the latter is substituted for it.

Furthermore, although contrition is not required in the sacraments, some act of Penance, namely attrition, is always necessary. Attrition takes the place of contrition as an inferior act within the order of Penance, that is, within the subjective disposition of the person acting against sin. Thus, in every case and without any exception, it remains true at least that some act of Penance is necessary for salvation by necessity of means.

YOU WILL PRESS FURTHER. An act of charity justifies even without any act of Penance, when such an act is impossible because the sins have been forgotten. Therefore there is a case in which a man is justified without Penance; consequently Penance is not necessary by necessity of means.

REPLY. Even if in that case an act of charity justified without any relation to Penance, Penance would still be necessary by necessity of means, since the influence of charity would be exceptional and substitutive.

Moreover, an act of charity in justification in some way contains an act of Penance, and therefore virtually is Penance.

To understand this, one should note that the asserted necessity of repenting is to be understood in itself as referring to formal Penance, while accidentally, that is, in the case of sins being forgotten, a virtual act of Penance contained in an act of charity suffices. For all agree (perhaps with the exception of Cano) that an act of charity is necessary for justification; likewise, it is certain that an act of charity in some way virtually contains an act of Penance—not in the sense that the act of charity is satisfactory and compensatory for the offense, since that is proper and specific to Penance, but insofar as charity gives rise to and commands the proper act of Penance, and also insofar as an act of love, being more universal and fundamental, precontains under a higher aspect whatever is found in an act of justice and in the other affections of the rational appetite, and therefore offers God more than

penitential satisfaction itself offers. Finally, no one will deny that a person can elicit an act of charity while actually forgetting the sins he has committed (which can happen because of various dispositions of the subject, especially in sudden circumstances, as when someone is suddenly overtaken by the danger of death), and hence without a formal act of Penance. In such a case, therefore, a man is justified without a formal act of Penance, or with virtual Penance contained in an act of charity.

Furthermore, it is better to say that formal Penance itself is necessary for salvation simply and in every case by necessity of means, but either in reality or in desire, that is, either in itself or according to the desire for it contained in an act of charity, so that justifying charity is a certain Baptism of desire. Just as Baptism is simply said to be necessary in reality or in desire, so that regenerating charity is true Baptism of the Spirit, this manner of speaking better preserves the proper meaning of the terms and St. Thomas's manner of speaking, and more directly establishes the necessity of Penance itself.

In this doctrine all theologians seem substantially to agree, notably Scotus (IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 3), Biel, Cajetan (on q. 86, a. 2), Soto, Suárez, Ledesma, Gonet, and the Salmanticenses (On Justification, disp. 3, dub. 1, § 4). They disagree among themselves on another question connected with the preceding one, to be discussed below in Conclusion III (pp. 490 ff.): namely, whether a man can satisfy the precept of Penance through an act of charity or virtual Penance, without being bound to elicit (if he can, or if he recalls his sins) a formal act of contrition. This the Thomists commonly deny.

Suárez does not seem to attend to this distinction of the questions and to the different modes of speaking just mentioned when he writes: "Whether [Penance] is always formally necessary, or whether virtual Penance suffices, is disputed among the theologians. For Scotus ... Gabriel ... and others mentioned below think the virtual is sufficient. But others, especially recent Thomists, contend absolutely that formal Penance is always necessary. Cano also firmly maintains this, in his Relectio de Poenitentia, part 3, saying that an act of love of God above all things can remain in a man in mortal sin because of the absence of formal Penance. But Peter Soto, lectures 4 and 5 on Penance, while affirming the same necessity of formal Penance, denies that a man remaining in sin can have a true act of love without a formal act of Penance. Dominic Soto holds the same in dist. 15, q. 1, a. 2, with a twofold limitation [that is, except in the case of martyrdom or forgetfulness of sins]."[260]

[260] Suárez, De Poenitentia, disp. 9, sect. 1, Opera omnia, vol. 22 (Paris, 1866), p. 150.

The common opinion of the Thomists, however, is nothing other than that which is equivalently contained in these words of St. Thomas, q. 87, a. 1:

"The remission of guilt ... takes place through the union of man with God, from whom guilt in some measure separates him. But this separation takes place perfectly through mortal sin and imperfectly through venial sin; for through mortal sin the mind is turned wholly away from God, acting against charity, whereas through venial sin the affection of man is retarded so that he is not readily borne toward God. And therefore both sins are indeed remitted through Penance; for through each of them the will of man is disordered by an immoderate turning toward a created good. For just as mortal sin cannot be remitted so long as the will adheres to sin, neither can venial sin, because while the cause remains the effect remains.

"But for the remission of mortal sin a more perfect Penance is required, namely, that man actually detest the mortal sin he has committed, insofar as it is in itself, that is, that he take care to recall each mortal sin in order to detest each one. This, however, is not required for the remission of venial sins. Yet habitual displeasure, which is had through the habit of charity or the virtue of Penance, is not sufficient; for in that case charity would not be compatible with venial sin, which is evidently false. It follows, therefore, that a certain virtual displeasure is required: for example, when someone is so moved in affection toward God and divine things that whatever occurred to him which would retard him from this movement would displease him, and he would grieve that he had committed it, even if he did not actually think about it. This, however, is not sufficient for the remission of mortal sin, except with respect to sins forgotten after diligent inquiry."

Therefore the position of St. Thomas and the Thomists is this: for justification formal Penance is required in itself; but accidentally (or in the case of forgetfulness), virtual Penance suffices, contained in an act of charity, which, moreover, justifies in virtue of, or with the desire for, formal Penance. From this opinion one can depart in three ways: either by saying that formal Penance is required for justification, except in the case of forgetfulness in which virtual Penance suffices and is required, just as one might say that Baptism is required for regeneration except in the case of contrition before Baptism; or, simply speaking, by saying that for justification either formal or virtual Penance is required at will, such that even when someone remembers his sins he can be justified without a formal act of Penance; or by saying that neither formal nor virtual Penance is necessarily required for justification, but some other act, such as prayer, suffices.

The first mode, which belongs rather to the less accurate manner of speaking or understanding (as is clear from the example just given of Baptism, since Baptism itself operates in desire in an act of contrition which justifies before Baptism, and is therefore called Baptism of desire), is not uncommon among authors. The second and third modes are two errors, which Suárez attributes (rightly, it appears) to Medina and Vega respectively.

Suárez himself says on the matter: "It must be said that, outside the case of natural forgetfulness or inadvertence, sin is never remitted without a formal act of Penance. All teach this, except Medina, who in tractate 1 On Penance, q. 12, a. 2, says that a man, although thinking of God and of his sins, can of his own free will perform an act of love, which he calls fruitful and meritorious, thinking it sufficient for justification. But the opposite opinion ... is not only safer, but also truer."[261]

[261] Suárez, loc. cit., n. 11, p. 153.

"He adds that Vega, book 6 on Trent, chapter 38, teaches that through prayer alone a sinner can obtain the remission of mortal guilt without formal love or sorrow, because prayer also has an infallible promise. But that is an individual opinion, and it displeases me, because it is contrary to the general teaching of the Councils and Saints, and to the universal statements of Scripture, by which we have shown above the necessity of Penance and love; for this necessity demands that these at least be possessed virtually."[262]

[262] Ibid., n. 14, p. 154.

Conclusion III. Penance is necessary by necessity of precept, so that there exists a formal and distinct precept of Penance (q. 85, a. 1, sed contra; II–II, q. 14, a. 2; IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiuncula 3, ad 1; II Sentences, dist. 43, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3).

Proof 1. FROM SCRIPTURE AND THE FATHERS.

Among the words of Scripture and of the Fathers cited above, some plainly exhibit the character of a precept. The words "Do penance," "Repent" (Matthew 4:17; Acts 2:38; Apocalypse 2:5) are preceptive; for those expressions which are merely of counsel, or even express necessity of means alone (such as the necessity of possessing the state of grace), are not expressed in absolute but in conditional form (for example, "If you do this, you will obtain favor"; "Unless you die in the state of grace, you will not be saved"). Tertullian also speaks of the precept of repenting in explicit words.

Moreover, the more frequent expressions themselves which state necessity in a conditional form have the force of precepts. For they indicate not merely counsel but a certain necessity, since they are not stated in positive conditional form, as counsels are, but in negative form ("Unless you do penance," Luke 13:3; Apocalypse 2:5; Ecclesiasticus 2:22). Nor do they indicate merely necessity of means, which indeed is commonly expressed in negative conditional form, because, as will presently be said, necessity of means gives rise to necessity of precept in a matter which is possible (that is, when the means depends upon human freedom). Hence in the same passage of Apocalypse 2:5 the necessity of repenting is expressed interchangeably in words of command and in negative conditional words ("Do penance ... but if not ... unless you do penance"). Moreover, theologians derive from no other source the necessity of precept concerning Baptism and the Eucharist, expressed in the negative conditional form ("Unless a man be born again"; "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man").

This is confirmed. The Council of Trent (sessions 6 and 14; see above, pp. 414 ff. and 428 ff.) teaches the necessity of acts of faith, hope, love, and Penance for obtaining justification. Now the first three are necessary also by necessity of precept, which no theologian denies and which is everywhere affirmed or presupposed in the Church's teaching (cf., for example, Alexander VII, proposition 1 among those condemned in 1665; Denzinger 1101). Therefore the same must be said of the act of Penance, since its necessity is affirmed in the same manner by the Council of Trent, and there is nothing in the act itself, nor anything else, that requires the exclusion of such necessity.

Proof 2. FROM THE NATURE OF NECESSITY OF MEANS.

Those things which are necessary as means to salvation thereby become necessary also by necessity of divine precept, if they consist in matter which can be commanded, or which can be carried out by an act of free will (cf. II–II, q. 3, a. 2). For by the same will whereby God wills that man attain the end of salvation, He also wills that man take up the means instituted for that end; and that will would be frustrated unless it were imperative, or if the faculty of taking or passing over those means were left to man. Now Penance is a necessary means to salvation, consisting in an act of virtue capable of being performed by free will. Therefore it falls under a divine precept, no less than the acts of the other virtues (q. 85, a. 1, sed contra).

The distinction between Penance and grace or the supernatural virtues or aids is evident: these latter are not acts within the power of free will, but come from a principle outside it, being either infused habits or motions proceeding from a higher divine agent. Hence, rather than necessary means to salvation, they are properly called means or aids necessary for salvation.

Proof 3. FROM THE NATURE OF VIRTUE.

Penance is a true and distinct virtue. But there is a divine precept concerning every act of virtue. Therefore there is a true and distinct divine precept concerning Penance.

The minor premise is evident from the fact that nothing more "does the lawgiver intend [than] to make the citizens virtuous," as Aristotle says (Ethics IV, 3); nor is there any means better suited to this end than commanding the acts of the virtues.

Proof 4. FROM ST. THOMAS'S ACCOUNT OF THE DISTINCT SIN OF IMPENITENCE.

Impenitence, or the voluntary omission of Penance, or the determination not to repent, is a special and distinct sin. Therefore there is a special and distinct precept concerning Penance; for the omission of Penance could not be sinful unless its non-omission were owed, that is, unless its performance were prescribed.

The antecedent is proved from St. Thomas: IV Sentences, dist. 14, q. 1, a. 1, quaestiuncula 3, ad 1: "[Penance] is not formally opposed to every sin, but only to one, namely impenitence; and for this reason it need not be a general virtue."

II Sentences, dist. 43, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3: "Just as perseverance is spoken of in two ways: in one way as a special virtue, insofar as it denotes the purpose of persevering in a good undertaken until the end; and in another way as a circumstance of the other virtues, insofar as it denotes actual continuance in the acts of the virtues until death; so likewise impenitence, insofar as it denotes the purpose of not repenting, is a species of sin against the Holy Spirit. But insofar as it denotes remaining in sin until death, denying repentance for the sin, it is thus an accident or circumstance of other sins."

II–II, q. 14, a. 2: "On the part ... of sin, there are two things which can hold a man back from repentance: one is the disorder and baseness of the act itself, consideration of which is wont to induce repentance in a man for the sin committed; and against this stands impenitence, not indeed in the sense of remaining in sin until death, as impenitence was understood above (for in this sense it would not be a special sin, but a circumstance of certain sins), but impenitence is taken here in the second sense, which involves a determination not to repent. The other is the smallness and brevity of the good which a man seeks in sin ... the consideration of which is wont to induce a man not to establish his will firmly in sin; and this is removed through obstinacy, when a man firmly establishes his determination in this, that he should cling to sin."

YOU WILL SAY. St. Thomas, II–II, q. 14, a. 1, ad 3, says that final impenitence is not a special sin but "a circumstance of any sin"; in this sense also the holy Doctor, in the body of the same article, explains Augustine's words concerning sin against the Holy Spirit, or final impenitence, saying: "Augustine ... in the book On the Words of the Lord[263] says that blasphemy, or sin against the Holy Spirit, is final impenitence, namely when someone perseveres in mortal sin until death. This indeed comes about not only by a word of the mouth, but also by a word of the heart and by deeds, not by one alone but by many. But this word, taken in that manner, is said to be against the Holy Spirit because it is contrary to the remission of sins, which takes place through the Holy Spirit, who is the charity of the Father and the Son."

[263] St. Augustine, Sermon 71, chapter 12, no. 20; chapter 13, nos. 21 ff.; chapter 21, no. 34; chapter 22, no. 36 (PL 38, 455 ff.).

REPLY. Suárez, Vázquez, and Lugo offer various interpretations of this text of St. Thomas, which there is no time to refute here. As is clear from the two passages just cited, the second of which belongs to the context of the words you object, the holy Doctor distinguishes a twofold impenitence. The one is material and negative, consisting in the very fact of dying in sin; this does not of itself constitute a special sin, but is identified with the sin or sins in which the man dies, although it may be joined to an initial intention to repent, which perhaps was prevented by sudden death from being carried through to the act of Penance itself. The other is formal and positive, consisting in the very determination not to repent when the obligation of repenting is pressing. The first impenitence, therefore, the holy Doctor calls a condition or circumstance of any sin; the other he explicitly asserts to be a special sin.

As to the character of this special sin of impenitence, take the following from the Salmanticenses:[264]

[264] Suárez devotes a direct and particular disputation to this sin (De Poenitentia, disp. 15, sect. 2). For a broader and more instructive treatment see the Würzburg theologians, De Poenitentia, disp. 1, c. 4, a. 3; their complicated doctrine, however, must be received with a large grain of Thomistic salt, distinguishing what is certain from what is uncertain.

"Since ... final impenitence is the voluntary omission of Penance owed, being against an affirmative precept, it requires no other rule for being voluntary in itself than that found in all other voluntary omissions against affirmative precepts. Hence, in exactly the same way in which the sinful omission of the love of God can be explained, whether through a directly voluntary act, or through the voluntary in its cause, or virtually and interpretatively, or even, if one prefers, through a directly voluntary act, without any greater difficulty, whichever of those explanations obtains, it must be applied to the omission of Penance, or final impenitence.

"But we, following what we have handed down in the treatise On the Will, disputation 4, doubt 1, must suppose that a voluntary omission of Penance is not possible at the instant at which the precept presses unless some act has preceded it which is the cause or occasion of the omission; not because the omission is voluntary through the very act which it presupposes, but because it cannot be formally an immediate, indirect, and indirectly voluntary proceeding without presupposing a positive exercise of the same will concerning its end and proper object, as we have explained more precisely there.

"From this it follows that a man can be voluntarily impenitent in two ways:[265] either expressly and formally, from some perverse motive which he loves more, applying himself to omission. This manner of omitting is explained by a refusal, as if he said: 'While the precept stands and presses, as I see it does, I do not wish to repent.' And this omission is formal and express, although indirect, as we explained in the same treatise, disputation 1, doubt 1, no. 19, where we established that something may be formally and expressly voluntary, although not directly, against those who maintained that the directly voluntary coincides with the formally and expressly voluntary, and conversely. The opposite view is evident in every omission; for, granted that doctrine, no omission could be indirectly voluntary, since it would not arise from a direct will but would presuppose a positive influx. Nevertheless it can be, and frequently is, formally and expressly voluntary, as in the case supposed, and others.

[265] Cf. Salmanticenses, Disputation 5, doubt 7, § 4, no. 288.

"Or he may not act so expressly, and may behave negligently at the time when the precept is pressing, being distracted by other things incompatible with observing the precept; by force of this his omission is voluntary in its cause, and even in itself, as with someone who, in order to devote himself to play, omits Mass and during the time of the sacred service thinks nothing about his obligation to hear it. In whichever of these ways a man acts with respect to impenitence, when the precept is pressing he commits the special sin of impenitence, and it is indirectly voluntary in him and therefore imputable. Thus it is clear that this determination not to repent, which the Doctor teaches to be the special sin of impenitence, can very easily be explained; nor does it present any difficulty not found in other omissions."[266]

[266] De Poenitentia, disputation 5, doubt 6, § 3, no. 227, Cursus theologicus, vol. 19 (Paris, 1883), pp. 543 ff.

NOTE I. ON THE THREEFOLD SOURCE OR TITLE FROM WHICH THE OBLIGATION TO REPENT ARISES (q. 84, a. 5, ad 2; cited in art. 19, p. 464).

The obligation to repent arises in the sinner not only from the title of satisfaction or justice toward God, which is its immediate, intrinsic, and elicitive motive, but also from at least three other titles, namely charity toward God, charity toward oneself, and mercy toward oneself, which constitute a mediate, extrinsic, and imperative motive.

First, justice itself requires a man to elicit an act of satisfaction for sin. Moreover, charity toward God also requires this, since charity cannot be exercised unless sin is removed through satisfaction; and consequently by the very obligation by which one is bound to love God, one is bound to repent, because he who is bound to an end is bound to the means. Likewise, charity toward oneself requires each man to consult his own good, especially his spiritual good, and consequently to remove sin by Penance, so as to obtain for himself the good of the spiritual life which is most necessary to him. Finally, mercy toward oneself requires each man to come to the aid of his own need and consequently to remove sin, which is the cause of his greatest misery, need, and spiritual ruin.

To forestall objections that might be brought against this doctrine, observe carefully that the concurrence of several motives in the same obligation does not multiply the acts, or the precepts, or the sins, because it does not multiply the object.

For the act prescribed is one and the same act of contrition, which is elicited by the virtue of Penance alone and commanded, by moral necessity, by charity and mercy. Thus, while remaining within the proper species and elicitive causality of the virtue of Penance, it attains the intrinsic and specific end of satisfaction, which is its immediate motive; and through the command or ordering of the acts of charity and mercy it also attains their end, which constitutes its extrinsic and mediate motive.

Moreover, the precept of Penance itself remains one and is not in any way multiplied, but is merely made subject to the extrinsic obligating impulse of the other precepts of charity and mercy.

Likewise the sin incurred by violating this precept is one, namely the sin of impenitence, since it concerns one precept and one direct obligation, although several motives concur in it. For, more generally, even a plurality of precepts, however distinct and not mutually subordinate, does not produce a plurality of sins when they concern the same object.

NOTE II. ON THE RELATION OF THE PRECEPT OF PENANCE TO AN ACT OF CHARITY AND TO SACRAMENTAL JUSTIFICATION.

Since an act of charity can, when sins have been forgotten, justify without a formal act of Penance, and reception of the sacrament of Baptism or Penance justifies with attrition alone, or without the proper act of the virtue of Penance, as was said in Conclusion II, the following three questions naturally arise among theologians.

1. *Whether one can satisfy the obligation arising from the precept of Penance by an act of charity alone, omitting the act of Penance itself or preceding it.*

Some, with Suárez (disp. 15, sect. 1, nos. 11–14), answer affirmatively. They say that by an act of charity there is rendered to God whatever satisfaction would be rendered by an act of Penance, although under a different motive, namely not under the motive of justice but of love. Hence, once the aforesaid satisfaction is offered through charity, the obligation arising from the precept of Penance is extinguished, "just as among men, if someone in fact restores another's property, even though he does not do so by a formal act of justice, intending the other's honor, but rather out of love for someone, or from fear of punishment, he nevertheless satisfies the obligation of justice, because this is enough that he neither transgresses that obligation nor remains bound by it any longer. ... In this way, therefore, this precept does indeed pertain of itself to the special virtue of Penance, although in reality it can be fulfilled by the acts of charity alone."[267]

[267] Suárez, De Poenitentia, disp. 15, sect. 1, nos. 12, 14, Opera omnia, vol. 22 (Paris, 1866), p. 293.

Others, especially Thomists, rightly deny this. First, because, in general, the precept of one virtue cannot be fulfilled by an act of another (unless we wish to abolish the distinction between precepts and virtues), since an obligation corresponds to a precept, and to the obligation there corresponds an object which is an act of one virtue, formally distinct from an act of another. Second, because, in the present case, by an act of charity alone no satisfaction whatsoever is rendered to God for sin, since charity is not of itself satisfactive: it does not grieve over sin or detest sin by way of compensation, but simply detests it, or holds it in hatred, as an evil opposed to friendship, as was stated in article 12 (pp. 289, 291, 325 ff.). The example of restitution introduced by Suárez, far from proving his point, can be turned against his doctrine. For, in the first place, strictly speaking another's property can be restored only under the title of justice (that is, to return to its owner what was unjustly taken); moreover, if you have stolen three coins from someone and give that person three coins not for the purpose of satisfying justice (we are speaking here of the end of the work, whatever may be the extrinsic end of the person acting, whether that of beneficence or liberality, or another title), but under another end or title, you still remain bound in justice to restore the three coins which you stole.

From what has been said it follows: (1) that when someone elicits an act of charity he has not yet satisfied the precept of repenting; hence the act of Penance itself must necessarily follow, and, when there is awareness of sins committed, it is necessarily consequent upon, and commanded by, the act of charity; (2) that if someone performs an act of charity alone, and because the sin has been forgotten no act of Penance follows, he has in no way satisfied the precept of Penance, although the omission is blameless on account of the impossibility of repenting, and although a person is immediately justified through the very act of charity. Whether in this case, however, someone is subsequently bound to elicit an act of contrition when he recalls his sins is another question, to be discussed immediately.

2. *Whether one who, having forgotten his sins, has been justified through an act of charity alone, or without a formal act of contrition, is still bound to satisfy the precept of Penance by eliciting a formal act of contrition, and indeed as soon as his sins come back to mind.*

Some, such as Vázquez (on q. 86, a. 2, doubt 2) and Lugo (disp. 7, sect. 12, no. 256), deny this. They say there is no reason why the obligation to repent should still persist, since through the act of charity, as through a more perfect act, the act of Penance has been supplied for, and especially since its end, namely justification, has been attained; but once the end has been attained, the necessity of means ordered to that end ceases.

More commonly, however, theologians rightly affirm it, both Thomists, such as Nugnus, Prado, and the Salmanticenses (disp. 5, doubt 7, § 8), and those of other schools, such as Suárez (disp. 4, sect. 6; disp. 15, sect. 4; disp. 19, sect. 1), Coninck, and Becanus. St. Thomas manifestly presupposes this opinion in IV Sentences, dist. 17, q. 2, a. 2, quaestiuncula 3, ad 2: "If ... sins have been cast out of memory, then [a man] is excused, by reason of inability, from the obligation of doing penance, and a general contrition for everything in which he has offended God suffices. But when the inability is removed, as when the sin is recalled to mind, then a man is bound to be contrite in particular; just as a poor man who cannot pay what he owes is excused, and yet is bound to pay as soon as he is able."

The reason is that which is expressed in these last words of the holy Doctor. For the precept of Penance obliges by its own force to render satisfaction to God for sin, and that satisfaction is rendered only through an act of contrition. Hence someone who has been justified by charity alone, since he has not yet rendered that satisfaction to God, is bound to offer it as soon as he can. Besides, even if one were to set aside or consider only as satisfactive and remedial the act of Penance as a means toward justification, the obligation to perform it could still be said to persist after justification has been obtained through charity alone. For, from the fact that an act of contrition is strictly necessary for justification (except for the case of attrition together with the sacrament), as was proved in Conclusions I and II, it follows that an act of charity, in the case of sins that are forgotten, does not justify except, as it were, by reason of a vow to elicit contrition. Accordingly, the act of contrition must be supplied even after justification has been obtained, just as happens with Baptism which justifies through a vow to receive it, or with charity in a vow of contrition.

Hence the adversaries' reasoning collapses. For an act of charity, although more perfect than contrition and containing it in some manner virtually, cannot supply for an act of contrition, either under the aspect of satisfaction or even simply under the aspect of a means toward justification, since it is not equivalent to contrition: it contains contrition neither properly in itself nor eminently, either formally or even eminently and virtually.

3. *Whether one who has been justified through attrition alone together with the sacrament is still bound to satisfy the precept of Penance, or to elicit an act of contrition.*

A few, such as Medina (Codex de Poenitentia, tract. 1, q. 2), Vega, Valentia, Isambert, and Morinus (De administratione Poenitentiae, book 8, chapter 4), answer affirmatively, led by the consideration that we are bound to retract certain sins and grieve over them as offenses against God, and to offer God perfect satisfaction, which, they say, can be rendered only through an act of contrition.

More commonly, however, other theologians rightly deny it, both Thomists, such as the Salmanticenses (loc. cit.), and others, such as Suárez (disp. 15, sect. 4, no. 13), Vázquez (loc. cit.), and Lugo (loc. cit., no. 255).

For, granted the institution of the sacrament, the precept of contrition (or attrition), both insofar as contrition is a satisfaction and insofar as it is a means toward justification, is no longer absolute, but as it were hypothetical; or rather, in its place there has been substituted the more general and disjunctive precept of Penance, to be fulfilled either by attrition together with the sacrament or by an act of contrition itself. And the reason is that through the institution of the sacrament God has granted man a certain means of repenting, making satisfaction, and obtaining justification, altogether equivalent to an act of contrition, or rather surpassing it, on account of the efficacy of the virtue and satisfaction of Christ which are added to the imperfect act of Penance furnished by man through attrition. Hence this means can take the place of an act of contrition and consequently free a man from the obligation to perform that act.

Hence the adversaries' reasoning collapses, because through the sacrament together with attrition perfect compensation for sin is rendered to God. Nor does it matter that attrition is an imperfect retraction of sin and no satisfaction; for on the one hand it is a true and efficacious retraction and a true act of Penance, while on the other hand its twofold imperfection just mentioned is more than compensated for by the satisfaction of Christ added to it. And thus, according to the common saying of theologians, by means of the sacrament man is made contrite from being attrite.

And to anticipate another objection which might arise from the contrary opinion defended above, that the obligation to be contrite persists after justification by an act of charity, notice that there is a great difference between the two cases. For, first, an act of charity is in no way an act of Penance, whereas attrition is a true act in the order of Penance, or of the retraction of and sorrow for sins, even though it is an imperfect act and does not proceed from the virtue of Penance itself, any more than does the act of charity itself. Moreover, an act of charity is in no way satisfactive, whereas attrition, although because of its conjunction with sin it does not imply the satisfaction proper to an act of contrition, is nevertheless joined to the sacrament into one whole, which, by the influx of Christ's satisfaction, is equivalent to, and takes the place of, the satisfaction that would have had to be rendered by a man through an act of contrition.

Suárez aptly remarks on this point: "There is a great difference between the remission of sin obtained through love alone, without any formal Penance, and that obtained through the sacrament together with attrition. For the former is not a disposition sufficient of itself, nor does it formally contain the satisfaction required toward God; and thus remission does not take place through it except under the burden and vow of Penance. The latter, however, is a disposition, and as it were a satisfaction sufficient of itself, by Christ's institution, through which a certain commutation has been made, as it were, of the necessity of contrition into the necessity of confession together with all the things requisite for it. Thus He accepts attrition absolutely and supplies the sufficient satisfaction through the merits of Christ applied by the sacrament, which on man's part is due; and consequently the obligation of further contrition does not remain. For here the principle stated above holds: when the injury is simply remitted, the obligation of justice ceases. Moreover, this institution and privilege of the sacrament ought not to be made to carry so grave a burden, namely that, the absolute obligation of contrition being left in place, the burden of confession should be added. Therefore it has been

done rather by way of a commutation: for attrition joined to the sacrament is reckoned and accepted in the place of contrition."[268]

[268] Suárez, De Poenitentia, disp. 15, sect. 4, no. 14, Opera omnia, vol. 22 (Paris, 1866), pp. 311 ff.

To complete what has been said, and to forestall another objection which might arise from treating as parallel the case of contrition justifying before the sacrament and the case of the sacrament justifying without contrition, observe that charity, contrition, and the sacrament justify in different ways. The sacrament together with attrition justifies of itself, without an essential ordering to contrition or a vow of it; hence after reception of the sacrament there is no obligation to be contrite. Contrition, however, justifies of itself indeed, but with a vow of the sacrament; hence the sacrament must be received in reality at the proper time. Charity, on the other hand, justifies accidentally, on account of the absence of formal contrition, and all the more so through a vow of contrition (and also of the sacrament). Hence there remains the obligation both to elicit contrition and to receive the sacrament.

CONCLUSION IV. THE PRECEPT OF REPENTANCE IS OF DIVINE LAW NOT ONLY POSITIVE, THAT IS, INTRODUCED SOLELY BY THE FREE WILL OF GOD, BUT ALSO NATURAL, ARISING FROM THE VERY NATURE OF THE THING (q. 84, a. 7, body and ad 1; IV Sentences, dist. 22, q. 2, a. 3, q. 1, ad 2).[269]

[269] On these texts compare the discussion above, Article XVI, Conclusion I, pp. 408 ff.

Proof.

1. Every precept whose object is an act of virtue which is a necessary means to salvation is, by that very fact, of natural law, or obliges from the very nature of the thing, even if it is imposed by God through a positive act of His will; for the very fact that an act of virtue is a necessary means to the end of salvation naturally participates in the obligation of that end. Now, once elevation to the supernatural order is presupposed, the precept of Penance, no less than the precept of charity and of the other infused virtues, has as its object an act necessary to salvation. Therefore the precept of Penance, no less than the precepts of the other infused virtues, is not merely positive (as is established at least by the various commands of Scripture referred to in Conclusions I and III), but also natural; nor can it fail to belong to natural law once it is admitted to be a true and distinct precept.

2. By natural law, or from the very nature of the thing, a person is bound to make reparation for an injury inflicted upon another, for the intrinsic nature of justice demands, as a means, that the equality taken away through the injury be restored in its object through an adequate compensation for the injury. Therefore, by that very natural law, man is bound to make reparation for an injury done to God, which indeed cannot be done except through Penance.

YOU WILL SAY 1. The precept of repentance is supernatural; therefore it is not of natural law.

REPLY. I deny the consequence. This objection proceeds from an equivocation, or from a mistaken understanding of the word "natural" as applied to a precept. For "natural" is understood in two ways: first, as opposed to supernatural, and so it is said of a thing belonging to the natural order, or not elevated through grace; secondly, as opposed to free, and so it is said of something pertaining to the very nature or essence of a thing and not added to it by a positive act of will. The precept of the

infused virtue of Penance is called natural in this second sense, namely as opposed to a positive precept; more properly speaking, it is itself a supernatural precept of natural, or non-positive, law. Moreover, as was shown in Article XVI (Conclusion I), just as, once elevation to the supernatural order has been posited, a precept of repentance belonging to natural law is given, so too, as was stated there, that precept, once elevation to the supernatural order has been posited, is in a certain manner extended indirectly to the supernatural precept itself of repentance.

YOU WILL SAY 2. All precepts of natural law are contained either formally or virtually in the Decalogue; moreover, in themselves they are immutable and indispensable. But the precept of Penance is not contained in the Decalogue; and it is also mutable, since God can choose not to demand satisfaction for an injury, and in fact does not demand it in the case of a person who receives the sacrament with attrition alone.

REPLY. Not all particular precepts of natural law must be contained, or are contained, in the Decalogue, but only certain more principal, more general, more immediate, or better-known precepts. Thus the particular precept of loving God, which nevertheless is the root and foundation of the rest, is not directly contained in the Decalogue, although it is closely connected with the precept of worshipping and honouring God; the precept of Penance for an offense against God can also be reduced to this precept.

The fact that God yields His own right by not demanding the necessary satisfaction does not change or suppress the precept of Penance, but merely extinguishes the obligation in the individual. The same thing also occurs among men when one person remits a debt owed by another, and no one can therefore say that the precept of justice can be suppressed or changed.

The doctrine mentioned above of Suárez and Lugo, who distinguish between what is of natural law and what is of positive law in Penance, because it teaches that the determinate act of contrition is not of natural but of positive law, is altogether false. For the act of contrition is the proper act of Penance; hence, if the precept of Penance is of natural law, its proper act is such in a special and direct way. Nor is it of any avail to distinguish between an intention to make satisfaction, or satisfaction in general, and the very satisfaction which is concretely rendered through contrition; for since a man cannot properly make satisfaction except through contrition, if by natural law he is bound to make satisfaction, by that same law he is bound to contrition.[270]

[270] It is not worth refuting this opinion at greater length. Compare, however, if desired, its lengthy exposition and defense in Suárez (loc. cited above), and the no less extensive refutation of it by the Salmanticenses (disp. 5, dub. 6, § 6).

CONCLUSION V. THE PRECEPT OF PENANCE DOES NOT OF ITSELF OBLIGE IMMEDIATELY AFTER A SIN HAS BEEN COMMITTED (Quodlibet I, article 11; Supplement, q. 6, a. 5, body and ad 2 and 3).

Proof 1. FROM THE PROPER NATURE OF AN AFFIRMATIVE PRECEPT.

The precept of Penance is not negative but affirmative, as is evident both from the manner in which it is expressed ("Do penance") and especially from the object which it involves, namely an act of contrition. Now, while a negative precept, such as not stealing or not killing, obliges always and at all times, because the omission of it—that is, what the precept forbids—consists in a positive act of commission which is evil of itself and at all times, an affirmative precept obliges always but not at all

times, and therefore not of itself immediately; for the omission of what it commands is something merely negative, and therefore is not evil simply and of itself, but only at a determinate time, which is the time of necessity, to be assessed differently according to the character of the several precepts. Therefore the precept of Penance does not of itself oblige immediately after a sin has been committed.

St. Thomas speaks to the point (Quodlibet I, a. 11): "It is praiseworthy that a sinner confess his sin as soon as he conveniently can, because through the sacrament of Penance grace is conferred, which renders a man firmer in resisting sin. Some, however, have said that a man is bound to confess whenever an opportunity of confessing presents itself, so that if he delays, he sins. But this is contrary to the nature of an affirmative precept, which, although it always obliges, nevertheless does not oblige at all times, but according to place and time. The time for fulfilling the precept concerning confession seems to be when some circumstance is imminent in which it is necessary for a man to be confessed; for example, if the danger of death is imminent, or the necessity of receiving the Eucharist or Holy Orders, or anything of that kind, for which it is fitting that a man should be prepared, purified by confession. Hence, if any of these things is imminent and someone omits confession, he sins, provided the due opportunity is available. And because by a precept of the Church all the faithful are bound at least once a year, at the feast of Easter, principally to receive Communion, the Church has ordained that once a year, when the time for receiving the Eucharist is imminent, all the faithful should confess. I say, therefore, that to defer confession until that time is, speaking of itself, lawful; but accidentally it can become unlawful, for example, if some circumstance arises in which confession is required, or if someone puts off confession out of contempt. And likewise, accidentally, such a delay could be meritorious, if he postpones confession so that he may confess more prudently or more devoutly on account of the sacred season."

Ibid., objection 3: "One who is in sin is not bound immediately to be crushed with contrition, which destroys sin; otherwise a sinner would sin at every moment."

Supplement, q. 6, a. 5: "Since the intention of confessing is joined to contrition, a person is bound to have that intention when he is bound to contrition, namely when sins occur to his memory, especially when he is in danger of death, or in some other circumstance in which he would be obliged to incur sin without the remission of sin; just as a priest, when he is bound to celebrate, is bound to confess if there is a priest available, or, if none is available, he is bound at least to be contrite and to have the intention of confessing when an opportunity of obtaining a priest is offered."

Ibid., ad 2: "It is not necessary for bodily salvation that a physician be sought immediately, except when the necessity of a cure is pressing; and it is the same with spiritual illness."

Ibid., ad 3: "The retention of another's property against the owner's will is contrary to a negative precept, which obliges always and at all times, and therefore one is always bound to restore it at once. But it is otherwise with the fulfillment of an affirmative precept, which obliges always, but not at all times; hence one is not bound to fulfill it immediately."

Proof 2. FROM THE UNACCEPTABLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE OPPOSITE OPINION.

If a man were bound to elicit contrition immediately after sin, first, it would follow that whenever someone fell into a new sin against any virtue, he would at the same time sin by two sins: by the sin of impenitence, against the precept of Penance which would bind at every moment, and by the sin

opposed to the other particular virtue. Indeed, it would follow that a man, by not repenting, would commit as many sins as there are instants of time (cf. Quodlibet I, cited above), or at least would be committing an uninterrupted sin of actual impenitence. Consequently, penitents ought to accuse themselves in confession of this multiplication of sins, and confessors, at least learned and God-fearing ones, ought to inquire about it.

All these consequences are opposed both to the common judgment of the faithful and to the practice of penitents and confessors. For penitents, even those who rarely or only once a year approach confession, and for whom, as often happens, it is the case that they never elicit a special act of contrition or even think about postponing contrition, never accuse themselves of it; nor are confessors at all concerned to inquire about it. But one cannot assert that such common judgment and practice of the Church arise from an error in so grave a matter immediately pertaining to the spiritual good of souls.[271]

[271] Cf. Lugo, disp. 7, sect. 11, nos. 196–198.

Secondly, it would follow that it would not be lawful, indeed not even possible, to approach the sacrament of Baptism or Penance with attrition alone. For by the very fact that someone knowingly and willingly approached with attrition alone, he would sin mortally by omitting contrition; indeed, in that case, even attrition itself would not be possible, because one cannot have a true purpose of not sinning (which is required for every sufficient attrition) while actually transgressing mortally a precept, namely, in this case, the precept of contrition.[272]

[272] Cf. Lugo, ibid., no. 201.

This is confirmed by the parallel with the precept of confession, which does not of itself bind immediately, but at a determinate time. The parallel is evident because, on the one hand, both precepts oblige one to repent, although in different ways, and on the other, no other reason can be given why someone is not bound to confess immediately than that confession comes under an affirmative precept. In this matter the difference between the act of being contrite and the act of confessing is accidental and irrelevant, as is the fact that the former, but not the latter, is purely spiritual and therefore not measurable by time and easily accomplished. This is also evident from the whole context of the passages of St. Thomas cited above, in which he places the precept of contrition on the same level as the precept of confession with respect to what is essential in this question concerning the time at which the obligation binds.

YOU WILL SAY 1. From the fact that Penance is an affirmative precept it is not rightly inferred that it does not bind immediately, for in that inference the whole force of the principal argument consists. For the precept of charity, or of turning to God as the ultimate end, binds immediately at the first moment in which a man attains the use of reason, as St. Thomas teaches.[273]

[273] I–II, q. 89, a. 6; In II Sent., dist. 42, q. 2, a. 5, ad 7; Quaest. disp. De veritate, q. 28, a. 3, ad 4.

REPLY. In the aforesaid case the precept of charity binds immediately, not of itself and by reason of its object—for otherwise it would bind not only at that moment but also at succeeding moments—but accidentally and by reason of the subject (or, if one prefers, of itself in that subject), because in that case and for that subject the first moment of the use of reason is in fact the appointed time at which an affirmative precept, or a time of necessity, presses. For at the first instant of the use of reason a man is obliged to deliberate about himself and to turn to his ultimate end, to which he ought to

direct the remaining actions of his life; this conversion is accomplished by a single act of charity. Once that act of charity has been elicited and that first instant of the use of reason has passed, the man is not bound to elicit the act of charity again at succeeding instants, lest he sin at each of them. This again confirms the principle of our argument, namely that an affirmative precept binds not at all times but at a time of necessity.

YOU WILL INSIST. If a child arriving at the use of reason omitted the aforesaid act of charity and conversion to God, and thus sinned, the obligation of that conversion would press again immediately after the sin, indeed it would continue to press until it were fulfilled; and the man could not satisfy this prior obligation except by removing the sin through an act of Penance.

REPLY. In that case the obligation of conversion would indeed press continually, but not *at every moment*; rather, it would press for the time of necessity, which in that case would be the whole and entire time running until the obligation had been fulfilled. Thus nothing follows against the principle assumed in the argument.

To understand this, observe with the Salmanticenses that "the time for observing a precept can be assigned in two ways: either as a terminal limit, so that, as we may say, it concludes the obligation at a determinate moment of time, beyond which it is not extended—as in the ecclesiastical fast, whose precept binds only on the specified day, for example the vigil of a feast or the Sabbath; and the precept of reciting the Divine Office, which does not extend beyond the natural day, as is evident from the common agreement of the Doctors. Or time may be designated, not as a limit ending the obligation, but as forbidding that the prescribed work be put off beyond that time. This mode of binding differs from the first in that, when the time has passed, the obligation does not cease; rather, the person who has transgressed the precept is still bound, as soon as he morally can, to observe it, whereas one who has morally omitted the former precept can no longer observe it. … [Thus] someone bound to pay money on a certain day, if he omits payment, is still bound to pay as soon as he morally can, because that limit was not imposed to terminate the obligation but to prevent payment from being deferred longer. In this manner theologians both within and outside the school of St. Thomas commonly teach that men are bound by the precept of annual Confession or Communion. …"

"Furthermore, the instant in which the use of reason first occurs is destined for a man's conversion to God, not in the first manner but in the second. For since a man must deliberate concerning his ultimate moral end and determine for himself that he will live according to right reason and pursue that end, this is not the business of that instant alone, but of his whole life, toward which he is consequently always bound to strive. For it would be ridiculous, indeed absurd, for the obligation to direct one's entrance into rational life toward God, and to prepare for oneself the road and merit by which to gain the crown, to bind only for the one instant in which a man begins his pilgrimage toward the Lord, and not to bind throughout the course of life to make the aforesaid conversion."[274]

[274] De Poenitentia, disp. 5, dub. 7, § 2, no. 274; Cursus theologicus, vol. 19, Paris, 1883, pp. 581–582.

From the fact that in that case the precept of Penance also presses together with the precept of charity, nothing follows against the Conclusion: first, because this would occur only in that case and by reason of the subject; secondly, because it would occur by reason of a time of necessity, which accidentally and in fact would be fixed at the instant immediately following the sin, as has been said

concerning the act of charity itself; thirdly, because it would occur not of itself and directly by reason of the precept of Penance, but accidentally and by reason of the fulfillment of the precept of charity, which would require an act of Penance.

Hence the principle stands: an affirmative precept does not of itself bind at all times or immediately, but at an appointed time of necessity, wherever and whenever that necessity arises, whether from the proper requirement of the precept, from the requirement of another precept, or from the circumstances of the subject, and whether immediately or at a later time. The Conclusion also stands: the precept of Penance never of itself binds immediately after a sin.

YOU WILL SAY 2 (according to the mind of Cajetan, cited above at pp. 475–476). Although the precept of Penance is primarily affirmative, it also includes the negative precept not to retain hatred of God, and in this sense can be called a mixed precept. Therefore, at least insofar as it is negative, it immediately obliges one to lay aside hatred of God.

REPLY. Strictly speaking, no affirmative precept includes a negative precept, even though it entails the obligation not to omit the positive act which it commands. This latter obligation does not differ from the obligation of the affirmative precept, but is that very obligation expressed in negative form. Thus the positive precept of hearing Mass entails, or rather is identical with, the obligation not to omit hearing Mass, or the obligation not to fail to hear Mass; and similarly the precept of repenting is the precept not to omit Penance, or not to fail to repent, or simply to repent. Properly speaking, a negative precept is one that obliges a person not to perform some positive act, such as stealing or killing.

The precept not to retain hatred of God is understood either as removing habitual hatred of God, which consists in the very state of sin; and then it is plainly the same as the precept of repenting itself, expressed negatively ("not to retain hatred of God" = "not to remain impenitent"); or it is understood as forbidding the positive act of hatred of God, or actual complacency in the state of sin, which is a new sin. In that case it is indeed a true negative precept, binding immediately and always, but it is not the precept of Penance.

YOU WILL SAY 3. If a person were not bound to elicit an act of Penance at least as soon as the sin came to mind, it would follow that he could lawfully elicit this act: "I do not wish to repent," or "I will not repent"; for it is lawful to will not to do something that it is lawful not to do, and to will to do something which it is lawful to do.

REPLY. I distinguish the assertion: a person could lawfully elicit such an act if it is taken as a will not to repent at some determinate time at which no necessity of repenting presses, I concede; for such a will is not evil, nor is it an intention to persist in the state of sin, since together with it there stands the will to repent at the due time. If it is taken as a will not to repent absolutely and at any time, I deny; for this will is intrinsically evil, because it involves the intention of persisting in sin and excludes the will to repent at the due time, or to do what the precept of Penance requires when it ought to be done.[275]

[275] The Salmanticenses examine this reply subtly: disp. 5, dub. 7, § 4, nos. 285 ff.

YOU WILL SAY 4. The sinner is obliged to contrition immediately, at least on account of the danger of forgetting his sins, and the consequent danger of never repenting and of transgressing the precept of Penance.

REPLY. A man is bound only to avoid the danger of sin. But the aforesaid danger of forgetting does not constitute a danger of sinning through failure to repent. For forgetfulness of sins will either be involuntary and inculpable, in which case the omission of Penance will not be a sin but merely a material transgression of the precept of repenting; or it will be voluntary and culpable, in which case the omission of Penance will indeed be a sin and imputable, but not precisely by reason of forgetfulness: it will be so by reason of the voluntariness and culpability of the forgetfulness itself. Thus the man who omits an act of Penance will sin not because he has forgotten, but because he has voluntarily and culpably forgotten.

If a man were bound to be contrite immediately on account of the danger of forgetfulness, he would for the same reason be bound to confess immediately, indeed by an even stronger reason, since confession requires a determinate and specific recollection of sins, which contrition does not necessarily require, since contrition bears upon sin under the common and generic aspect of an offense against God. Yet, as all admit, no one is bound to confess immediately.

YOU WILL SAY 5. That the precept of Penance is negative and therefore binds immediately follows from the very nature of Penance insofar as it is a certain justice of man toward God. For, according to St. Thomas (II–II, q. 62, a. 8), on account of an injury inflicted upon another a negative precept binds one immediately to repair the injury through due compensation and restitution of what was taken. Therefore the precept of Penance, by which a man is obliged to repair the injury done to God and to restore to God the honour of which He is deprived through sin, is a negative precept binding immediately.

REPLY. This argument rests upon a false supposition, namely that Penance consists properly in some restitution to God of a good taken from Him and that there is consequently a parallel between the precept of repenting and the precept of making restitution. Among men not every obligation of justice is an obligation of compensation and satisfaction, nor is every obligation of compensation and satisfaction an obligation of restitution (as appears in the obligation of paying a debt arising from a contract, which is an obligation of compensation and satisfaction but not of restitution); although from an injury or loss, whether physical (as in respect of a person or external goods) or moral (as in the taking away of reputation or honour), there arises an obligation not only of satisfaction but also of restitution, or of satisfaction through restitution.

In the case of a sinful man in relation to God, however, there arises an obligation of justice, namely of compensation and satisfaction through an act of Penance. This act cannot be restitution, and consequently is not the matter of a negative precept binding immediately. The reason for the disparity is that every injury inflicted upon man takes from him some physical or moral good which must therefore be restored; but an offense inflicted upon God takes nothing from God, and therefore does not entail an obligation of restitution. For all the harm which sin causes lies on the part of the sinner himself, and God Himself suffers no loss whatever, either physical or moral; rather, all the harm of sin, even in relation to God, consists in the affection or will rather than in an effected loss.

Nor is it useful to insist that through sin God is harmed even in its effects, or in external moral goods, insofar as He is deprived of honour among men, just as men themselves are harmed through the loss of their reputation.

For, first, by many sins, such as hidden sins, the honour of God among men is not taken away; and hence, at least with regard to such sins, it would not be necessary to repent immediately, and then it would be necessary to distinguish two precepts of Penance, one merely restitutive and the other merely satisfactory, whereas the precept of Penance is one and simple. Secondly, in the case of external and public sins it would suffice to make external reparation, for example by preaching the greatness of God or merely by outwardly observing the divine precepts, without the interior retraction of sins in which Penance consists. Consequently the very precept of repenting, which is in question, would not then bind. Thirdly, an external violation of divine law does not properly remove God's honour and reputation among men, because it does not diminish men's estimation of God; rather, it increases the manifestation of His clemency, who does not immediately avenge sins but by His beneficence alone perseveres in enlightening and warming both good and evil men. Fourthly, the offense against God that must be repaired, unlike an offense against man, consists essentially in the will or affection, and so requires satisfaction that can consist in the affection alone; nor can it be a matter of restitution, since, as has already been said, all the harm consists on the part of the will and affection of the offender.

YOU WILL SAY 6. The precept of fraternal correction obliges immediately. Therefore, by parity of reasoning, and indeed with stronger reason, the precept of correcting oneself, or of Penance, does so.

REPLY. I deny the antecedent. The precept of fraternal correction (just like the precept of Penance) binds at a determinate time, according to opportunity and necessity. And, whether one considers a brother's sin as past, no one is bound to correct him immediately concerning it, just as the sinner himself is not bound immediately to correct himself or to repent—indeed a man's obligation toward himself is stricter than toward others—or one considers a brother's sin as present or future (that is, insofar as there is an imminent danger of sinning), then a person is bound to correct him immediately, if it is opportune, or can be done with hope of amendment; for then it is a time of necessity. Likewise everyone is immediately bound to desist from actual sin and avoid the danger of sinning. This, however, does not pertain to Penance, whose object is to regard a habitual sin already committed.

YOU WILL SAY 7. St. Thomas himself seems to teach an obligation to repent immediately.

For in the same text from *IV Sentences*, cited to prove the Conclusion, he says that a man is bound to contrition "when his sins occur to his memory."

Similarly, in *Quodlibet* I, article 11, cited in the same place, the Holy Doctor says in his reply to the argument *On the contrary*: "Bodily disease, unless the remedy of medicine is applied, always grows worse in its subject, unless perhaps it is also extinguished through the power of nature; but the disease of sin is extinguished through contrition; and therefore it is not similar." The meaning of these words is this: for a bodily illness a medicinal remedy is not to be applied immediately, because otherwise the disease grows worse; but for a spiritual illness the remedy of confession is not to be applied immediately, because the disease itself is extinguished by the remedy of contrition. According to St. Thomas, therefore, it follows that contrition must be applied immediately.

Moreover, in II–II, q. 62, a. 8, he says: "It is evident that it is not lawful to remain in sin for even a short time; rather, everyone is bound to abandon sin immediately, according to Ecclesiasticus 21:2: 'Flee from sin as from the face of a serpent.'"

REPLY. From the context of the texts objected it is plain that nothing can be concluded from them against the Conclusion.

As to the first text, we say first that if these words were taken in a rigid sense and apart from their context, it would follow that a man would have to repent continually if his sins continually came to mind; this is contrary to St. Thomas's teaching in q. 84, a. 9, explained above in Article XXI.

These words therefore need some gloss or explanation. Two explanations can be offered according to Cajetan's mind: first, when sins occur to the mind one ought to repent either positively by an act of contrition (as happens in many cases, because the practical recollection of sin in a person who does not grieve seems to imply approval of or complacency in the sin), or as it were negatively, by turning the mind away from consideration of the sin, as was said in Article XXI; secondly (and better), one ought at once to grieve over a sin when its recollection occurs at a moment of necessity, or at a time when the precept of Penance presses, particularly the danger of death.

On this matter Cajetan says: "If the words of the divine Thomas are carefully weighed, they do not say that a man is bound to contrition *when he remembers*; rather, they determine one *when* by another *when*. For they say, *when sins occur to the memory at a time when there is danger of death or some critical circumstance*. From this it appears that the time of remembering is determined by the time of danger of death or by the time of some critical circumstance, and so forth. Nor is it an objection that the word *particularly* is added. For *particularly* denotes the primacy of the danger of death in relation to the other member of the disjunction, namely, *or of some critical circumstance*, and so forth: it is more perilous to omit contrition in danger of death, because no further opportunity for Penance remains [Heb. 12:17]. Or *particularly* denotes the primacy of the reason obliging one to contrition: thus recollection provides a certain reason for being contrite; but because it is not a sufficient reason to oblige one to contrition, the principal obliging reason is added, in the words *when especially danger or a critical circumstance*, and so forth. And this leads back to the same conclusion."[276]

[276] Opusculum 27, quaest. 7; cf. the Leonine edition of the works of St. Thomas, vol. 12, p. 378.

As to the second text, it must be said that, as appears from the second and third objections of that same article, St. Thomas speaks of a man *already justified through contrition*. The sense of the text, then, is this: a man who is already contrite is not bound to apply immediately the medicine of confession, because the sin has already been extinguished through contrition; whereas a person who is bodily ill is obliged immediately to apply medicine, unless in some case the disease is extinguished by the power of nature itself, just as spiritual disease is extinguished by contrition. Hence it does not follow that the Holy Doctor asserts or presupposes that contrition, unlike confession, must be applied immediately. Indeed, he explicitly denies this in the text of that same article quoted above in the proof of the Conclusion. Furthermore, in the passage from the *Sentences*, reply 2, quoted there, he draws the same comparison between bodily and spiritual disease and expressly teaches that in neither case is it necessary to apply the remedy unless necessity is pressing.

As to the third text, it must be said that it is not to the point. For there St. Thomas speaks of *actual sin* (namely the actual retention of another's property, which is the object of the whole article), and teaches that one must desist from it immediately, since it is intrinsically evil to persist in actual sin. Here, however, we are treating of *habitual sin*, and asking whether one must repent of it immediately.

CONCLUSION VI. The precept of repenting binds the sinner of itself at the point of death (cf. the same passages of St. Thomas cited in the preceding Conclusion).

PROOF.

For an affirmative precept, such as the precept of repenting, binds at some determinate time, namely, a time of necessity. But no time for repenting is more determinate and more necessary than the point of death, since after it there is no longer any time or possibility of fulfilling the precept: with death the time of meriting and repenting is closed.

Here, however, you must understand the *point of death* strictly, as distinct from a mere *danger of death*: that is, as those circumstances in which, in view of the natural powers and of what most commonly occurs, death follows with moral certainty, as in a fatal disease or wound. A danger of death, strictly understood, occurs when death probably follows in the same circumstances or eventualities, as in a very perilous sea voyage or a bloody war. Nevertheless, theologians frequently affirm that the same necessity of repenting exists also in a mere danger of death; for although that danger is not so certain, and although after it there may still remain a possibility of repenting at a subsequent point of death, this possibility is nevertheless highly uncertain. Thus a man who does not repent in such circumstances seems to expose himself to the proximate danger of dying without Penance. The same is to be said of the point or danger of permanent insanity, which can be likened to moral death.

NOTE. Theologians dispute whether the precept of Penance binds even at the point of death a person who has obtained justification through attrition together with the sacrament, although such a person is not obliged to contrition outside the point of death, as is proved, at the least, by what we said above (pp. 492 ff.).

Certain theologians affirm this, such as Thomas Sánchez (*De Decalogo*, vol. 1, book 1, ch. 9, no. 34), Valentia, Granados, and Bonacina. They say that the common opinion, which teaches that attrition with the sacrament suffices for justification, is not altogether certain; and therefore one who is at the point of death cannot be content with this remedy without exposing himself to the danger of damnation, but must seek a completely certain remedy through an act of contrition. In the course of life, however, a person may lawfully be content with the uncertain remedy according to the common opinion, and is not bound to elicit an act of contrition, because in that case he does not expose himself to the danger of damnation.

Suárez is also cited for this opinion (by Lugo and others: disputation 15, section 5, nos. 17–19), and the Würzburg theologians follow him almost word for word (*De Poenitentia*, disputation 1, chapter 4, article 2, no. 84). Yet Suárez, after stating that the opinion appears to him very probable, concludes simply by denying that such a person is obliged to contrition; he adds, however, that the person is obliged to an act of charity, since the obligation of charity presses especially upon everyone at the point of death. But an act of charity is virtual contrition. Accordingly the Würzburg theologians add: "The faithful, at the point of death, are bound to perfect contrition, at least virtually, for their sins, even if they have been confessed and absolved—or are still to be confessed and absolved—with attrition alone." Hence it is clear that Suárez must simply be numbered among the defenders of the negative opinion which is about to be explained, both on account of his favorable disposition toward the affirmative opinion and on account of his view concerning the necessity of an act of charity at the point of death.

Other, more numerous theologians rightly deny this, including (besides Suárez) Becanus, Fagundez, Laymann, Diana, Lugo (*De Poenitentia*, disputation 7, section 13), and the Salmanticenses (disputation 5, doubt 7, § 7), together with the more numerous Thomists. They teach that a sinner who, at the danger of death, is content with the sacrament of Penance together with attrition does not expose himself to any danger of damnation, any more than does a person who, in the same danger of death, is content with the sacrament of Baptism. For these sacraments were instituted by God for the help of man in this very matter, so that in a certain way they supply for acts of charity and contrition in the order of justification. Hence the same reasoning concerning the lack of urgency in the obligation to be contrite applies both during the danger of death and during the course of life.

The reason upon which the opposing opinion rests—namely that the efficacy of the sacrament with attrition alone is not certain—has no force; for that efficacy is at least morally certain (as it rests upon the most common opinion of theologians). Moreover, moral certainty suffices for lawful action. Otherwise, a man would likewise not be permitted to approach the sacraments unless he were absolutely certain of the sufficiency of his dispositions; nor would he be permitted, even in the course of life, to approach the sacrament of Penance with attrition alone, since it is never lawful to expose oneself to the proximate danger of sinning or to render the sacrament of Penance null or fruitless.

CONCLUSION VII. The precept of repenting also binds of itself even apart from the danger of death, in this sense: a man is bound not to remain for a long time in the state of sin, but must remove that state by an act of contrition within a period that is not long, morally estimated (I–II, q. 109, a. 8; *In IV Sentences*, dist. 17, q. 3, a. 1, quaestiuncula 4).

PROOF 1. FROM SCRIPTURE AND THE FATHERS.

Ecclesiasticus 5:4–8: "Do not say: I have sinned, and what sorrowful thing has happened to me? For the Most High is a patient rewarder. Be not without fear concerning sin that has been forgiven, and do not add sin upon sin. And do not say: The mercy of the Lord is great; He will have mercy upon the multitude of my sins; for mercy and wrath come speedily from Him, and His wrath looks upon sinners. Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and do not put it off from day to day."

Ecclesiasticus 17:21–23, 26–27: "Turn to the Lord, and forsake thy sins; pray before the face of the Lord, and diminish offences. Return to the Lord, and turn away from thy injustice, and greatly hate abomination. … Do not remain in the error of the ungodly; make confession before death; for from the dead, as from one who is nothing, confession perishes. Thou shalt confess while living; living and sound thou shalt confess."

Apocalypse 2:5, cited in Conclusion I (p. 478). Romans 2:4 ff.: "Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and patience and long-suffering? Knowest thou not that the goodness of God leads thee to repentance? But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath and of the revelation of the just judgment of God."

Augustine, Sermon 255, *On Penance* (in the Appendix among the Sermons on Time): "Penance is granted even in the last extremity, because it cannot be denied; yet we cannot assert that the man who asks for it in this way deserves to be absolved. For how does one who is falling perform Penance? How does one who is stationed at life's very end perform Penance? How can a man do Penance when he can no longer perform any works of satisfaction on his own behalf? And therefore the Penance which is sought by a sick man is sickly. The Penance which is sought only by a dying

man—I fear lest it itself should die. And therefore, dearly beloved, whoever wishes to find God's mercy should do Penance in this world while he is well, so that he may be able to be well in the next" (Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 39, 2217).

Leo the Great, Letter 108 (to Theodore of Forum Julii), no. 5: "Every Christian ought to have a judgment of his own conscience, lest he defer conversion to God from day to day, or appoint for himself a time of satisfaction at the end of his life. By this condition human frailty and ignorance perilously confine themselves, reserving themselves for the uncertainty of a few hours. And whereas a man might deserve pardon by a more complete satisfaction, he chooses the narrow limits of that time in which he will scarcely find room either for the penitent's confession or for the priest's reconciliation" (Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 54, 1013).

Pseudo-Augustine, *On True and False Penance*, ch. 17, no. 33: "If this conversion happens to someone even at the end, one must not despair of his forgiveness. But because so just a conversion occurs scarcely or rarely, one must fear for the person who repents late. For one whom sickness presses and punishment terrifies will scarcely come to true satisfaction, especially when the children whom he has loved unlawfully are present, and wife and world call him back to themselves. Late Penance is wont to deceive many. But because God is always powerful, He can always help even at death those whom He wills. … Yet because many things hinder and draw back the weakened man, it is most perilous to prolong the remedy of Penance until death and the withdrawal of the inward man" (Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 40, 1128).

From these and similar expressions, so grave and threatening, there is rightly gathered both the necessity of not postponing Penance excessively and the very precept forbidding a prolonged postponement. For in no other way do the opponents themselves, together with other theologians, gather from Scripture and the Fathers either the precept of Penance itself (cf. Conclusion III) or the precepts of the other supernatural virtues, especially faith and charity.

Nor is it a valid objection that, if those words were pressed, the precept of repenting immediately might also be inferred—a precept which we have denied above. For nowhere is it said that one must repent immediately; rather, only the postponement of Penance is gravely and emphatically condemned.

Nor is it a valid objection that Scripture and the Fathers vehemently condemn the postponement of Penance because there follow from it an increased ease of sinning, difficulty of repenting at life's end, and transgression of certain other precepts which, like the precept of charity, cannot be observed except by one who repents; and that therefore it follows only that postponement of Penance is forbidden accidentally, not of itself and directly by the precept against postponing repentance.

For in the texts cited, the very fact of delaying Penance is directly censured, the delay itself is condemned as an evil, and from the delay itself—rather than immediately from the danger of transgressing some particular precept—the danger to eternal salvation is inferred.

Moreover, it does not matter that transgressions of other precepts contribute mediately to establishing the danger to salvation upon which the obligation not to defer Penance is founded. For these transgressions arise by reason of the postponement of Penance itself: it is on account of this that the man who postpones repentance falls into so many sins and is compelled to violate so many

precepts that he places himself in danger of eternal salvation. Therefore the precept against postponing Penance binds of itself, and not merely by reason of the nonobservance of other precepts.

The Salmanticenses write to the point: "To make this clearer and to tear up the errors recounted by the roots, we must recall the teaching we handed down in the treatise *On Sins*, disputation 20, doubt 1, § 1, no. 6. There we established that a precept can very well bind by reason of the danger of sinning against other precepts and nevertheless bind of itself and by reason of its own nature, as we established there with respect to the precept of conversion at the first instant.

"And the reason is that an obligation *of itself* arises from a danger *of itself*. Such a danger is so named insofar as, from the absence of the proper act, a difficulty in acting well arises proximately and immediately. Moreover, this happens whenever the act is required, not casually and contingently or by the occurrence of some special accident, but by the nature of the thing and the order of the divine precepts, for avoiding danger; and according to the common order of things the danger cannot be warded off except by the performance of such an act. The danger itself does not threaten solely against this or that determinate precept, but commonly and indifferently against them all, or against many. Then the obligation is of itself, and the danger arising from the absence of such an act is also proximate, as we explain there more fully, setting an obligation of itself against an accidental obligation, and a particular danger against a common danger.

"That this is indeed the case in the present matter is manifest: for all those injuries which, according to the mind of the holy Fathers, threaten a man who remains a long time in his sins come upon him from the absence of Penance, through which he becomes proximately unable to avoid all sins, to observe all the other precepts, to overcome grave temptations arising against them, and innumerable other things that it would be lengthy to recount."[277]

[277] Salmanticenses, De Poenitentia, disp. 5, dub. 7, § 9, no. 323, in Cursus theologicus, vol. 19, Paris, 1883, pp. 619–620.

PROOF 2. FROM THE GRAVITY OF THE DANGER INHERENT IN PROLONGED POSTPONEMENT OF PENANCE.

Although the precept of repenting is not directly and properly negative, and consequently binds neither always nor immediately, nevertheless, as the very nature of an affirmative precept requires, it binds for a certain time determined by the very nature of necessity—not necessarily extreme necessity, but at least grave necessity, as is evident by comparison with other affirmative precepts, such as those of prayer and charity. Now prolonged continuance in the state of sin of itself brings about a reason of grave necessity for repenting, although not an extreme necessity such as exists at the point of death. Therefore the precept of Penance binds of itself even apart from the danger of death, namely, against remaining long in sin.

Proof of the minor premise. For one who remains a long time in sin exposes himself to a grave, although not extreme, danger of losing eternal salvation: he sins more frequently and more easily; little by little he becomes in a certain way hardened in sins, as habit passes into a second nature; and he readily exposes himself to the danger of final impenitence, both because of various causes that can bring about sudden death and because of the difficulty of repenting even at the point of death, arising from the weakened powers both of the sick body and of a soul that has long adhered to its sins.

The Würzburg theologians speak to the point: "It is not lawful to cast the greatest and most difficult matter of all, such as eternal salvation to be recovered through Penance, into the narrow straits of that moment, since the hour of death is most uncertain, the powers of body and soul are broken … or excessively weakened, and a man is least fit for good actions. Therefore St. Jerome, on Psalm 37, 'My wounds have putrefied and are corrupted because of my foolishness,' adds: 'Because I did not wish to do Penance.' …

"But if most holy men, with continual prayers, fastings, and tears, diligently strive to obtain final grace from God, how can he reasonably hope for it who, continually immersed in crimes, has put off the works owed to God and has determined only at the last point of death to turn back to God through Penance? For to such a man Penance will then be almost impossible: scarcely can he bring himself in that last extremity absolutely and efficaciously to detest his sins and to resolve that, if he should recover, he would truly avoid the sins to which he has so obstinately clung. For this reason St. Chrysostom says in his Eightieth Homily to the People: 'Evil things, when too firmly rooted, are more powerful than good things.' And St. Bonaventure, in volume 1, *Collation on Contempt of the World*, says: 'This I hold to be true: he has not a good end who has always had an evil life.'"[278]

[278] Würzburg theologians, Theologia dogmatica, vol. 10, De Poenitentia, disp. 1, ch. 4, a. 2, no. 85, Paris, 1880, pp. 75–76.

This proof is directly founded upon the following words of St. Thomas (although he nowhere directly treats the present question): "When a man does not have his heart firmly established in God, so that he would not wish to be separated from Him for the sake of acquiring any good or avoiding any evil, many things occur for the sake of obtaining or avoiding which a man departs from God by disregarding His precepts; and thus he sins mortally, especially because, 'in sudden occurrences, a man acts according to an end previously conceived and according to a habit already existing,' as the Philosopher says [*Ethics*, book 3, chapter 8]. Although, through the premeditation of reason, a man can act otherwise than in accordance with the order of the end previously conceived and the inclination of his habit, nevertheless, because a man cannot always engage in such premeditation, it cannot happen that he remain for a long time without acting in accordance with a will disordered away from God, unless he is quickly restored by grace to the due order" (I–II, q. 109, a. 8).

PROOF 3. FROM THE PARITY WITH THE PRECEPTS OF FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY.

These precepts, although they are only affirmative, bind at some point in life apart from the point of death; and the precept of charity in particular binds both at the beginning of rational life, at the point of death, and during the course of life, as is clear from the condemnation, by Alexander VII, Innocent XI, and Alexander VIII, of certain propositions teaching the contrary (Denzinger 1101, 1155, 1156, 1157, 1167, 1289). Therefore, by parity of reasoning, the precept of Penance also binds at some point in life, apart from the point of death.

The parity is clear from this: the reason why those precepts bind at some time in life apart from the point of death is that the acts of those virtues concern the ultimate end, toward which a man must actually tend at certain times during life. Now conversion to God is no less necessary to a man than a tendency toward Him as his ultimate end, since upon the very act of Penance depend both the love of charity and the attainment of the ultimate end.

OBJECTION 1. The precept of repenting is affirmative; therefore it does not oblige one not to defer an act of contrition; otherwise it would be a negative precept.

REPLY. Some, speaking improperly, say that the precept of repenting also includes a negative precept insofar as it prohibits delay. Properly speaking, however, one must say that, even as regards the time preceding the point of death, the precept of Penance is simply affirmative, although it can be expressed in the negative form of a prohibition against delay or an obligation not to defer Penance. For a properly negative precept forbids the performance of some positive act; but the postponement of an act of repentance is not an act, but rather the continued omission of an act. The precept of Penance, however, properly obliges one to perform the positive act of contrition within the time of necessity, that is, within a time not too prolonged. Hence the whole notion of negation pertains not to the precept or to its direct object, but to a condition of the object, namely time; indeed, not even simply to the time itself, which must after all be determinate in itself at some point, but to the manner in which the time is estimated and expressed. Moreover, this precept can also be expressed thus: a man is bound to elicit an act of contrition at that determinate time when, from omitting contrition, an urgent necessity or danger to salvation would result.

OBJECTION 2. A certain and determinate affirmative precept which obliges for an indeterminate time is unintelligible. Such, however, would be the precept of Penance obliging within some indeterminate period of time other than the determinate time of the point of death.

REPLY. Apart from the point of death, the time for repenting is sufficiently determined, though only in a general way, by the statement that a man cannot omit an act of contrition for a long time. A more particular determination can also be assigned according to the judgment of prudent men, even though this is subject to the fluctuating estimation of different minds, as frequently happens in matters which can be estimated only morally. Moreover, the same thing occurs with regard to the time for observing the precepts of faith, hope, and charity in the course of life, as is clear both from the teaching of theologians and from the documents of the Church recalled above.

As to the more particular determination of the length of delay within which the precept of repenting obliges, theologians have labored considerably.

Certain authors prudently refrain from assigning a general rule, as though this were practically impossible, because, they say, the gravity of the danger arising from the prolongation of delay—which gives rise to the obligation to repent—depends not a little upon the particular circumstances of different persons. Thus Suárez[279] writes: "This difficulty especially moves those who hold the contrary opinion [that is, the opponents of the obligation], and it also greatly troubles us, because we cannot designate this time in particular with certainty and precision. ... That time ... must be committed to the prudent judgment of the man himself, or of another who, knowing his conscience, can offer assistance, so that, after weighing all the circumstances, he may judge whether the delay is beginning to become excessive."[280]

[279] We said above (pp. 476 ff.), however, that on the opinion of Suárez and St. Alphonsus the obligation to repent is accidental, that is, arises from the necessity of satisfying the precept of charity.

[280] Suárez, De Poenitentia, disp. 15, sect. 6, no. 20, Opera omnia, vol. 22, Paris, 1866, pp. 332 ff.

Generally, theologians nevertheless endeavor, with a judgment of probability, to determine that period. Thus some say a week (Concina), or many days (Roncaglia), or four or five months (Billuart),

or six or eight months (Nugnus), or less than a year (St. Alphonsus), or one year (as especially Soto, Cano, Delgadillo, Laymann, Lugo, and the Salmanticenses, with whom modern writers seem readily to agree), or several years (as Lugo and Coninck, insofar as they say that the precept is certainly violated if Penance is deferred for three or four years, and especially Trullench, who, according to the Salmanticenses, allows a delay of five or seven years).

St. Alphonsus doubts the truth of the more common opinion, which extends the time of obligation to a delay of one year, and says that he does not wish to acquiesce entirely in it. He writes: "Some think that those are excused who satisfy the annual obligation of confession; and St. Thomas seems to adhere to this opinion [*On IV Sentences*, distinction 17, question 3, article 1, question 4]. But I do not entirely acquiesce: for a period of one year seems to me sufficiently considerable that a man remaining in mortal sin for so long a time could hardly avoid the danger of falling back into it again. Nor is it valid to say that the Church has determined a year as the time for everyone without distinction; for the Church has determined that time solely for the obligation of confession, and not for Penance. I do not deny, however, that sinners, especially the uninstructed, can for the most part, indeed almost always, be excused from this sin of deferred Penance by reason of inadvertence."[281]

[281] St. Alphonsus, Theologia moralis (ed. L. Gaudé), vol. 3, no. 437, Rome, 1909, pp. 434 ff.

Billuart holds a similar opinion, writing: "But how long must [Penance] be deferred for a sinner to be judged to have transgressed this precept and to have sinned mortally? St. Thomas did not determine it [in the two places cited above], nor am I one who would dare to determine it. Some, indeed, say that it can be deferred for a year without a new sin, which I do not approve; others, for four or five months, which I neither deny nor affirm. This one thing seems certain to me: that it is unlawful to defer it beyond that; for a delay beyond four or five months seems prolonged, especially if one attends to the principle of the Author. As, therefore, one who deferred eliciting acts of faith and charity beyond four or five months would not, at least in my judgment, be exempt from sin, so too one who omitted contrition. The precepts are indeed distinct, but the precept of contrition presses at least as much as the precepts of faith and charity.

"Nor is it an objection that the Church commands confession only once in the year; for the precepts are distinct, and the Church, in commanding the manner of justification through confession only once a year, does not deny that another manner, through contrition, must be employed sooner. Moreover, she prescribes confession more rarely, perhaps because it is very burdensome to man, whereas contrition is not, and she knows that the sinner can be justified by another way.

"Nor is it an objection that confessors do not ask penitents who have not confessed for a year whether they fulfilled this precept within the course of that year. For neither are they accustomed to ask whether during that period they elicited acts of faith, hope, and charity, although the obligation of these acts is pressing. Accordingly it seems that one must say: those who have not confessed for a year are either habitual sinners, and these are sufficiently understood to have failed in the precept; or they are not habitual sinners, and these, since they have laid aside their attachment to sin and attend Mass, divine offices, exhortations, and preaching, are presumed sometimes to elicit acts of contrition and of the theological virtues. Nevertheless, it would be advisable both for penitents to examine themselves on these matters and for confessors to question them."[282]

[282] Billuart, De Poenitentia, diss. 4, a. 3, Dico 3, Cursus theologicus, vol. 9, Paris, 1904, pp. 298 ff.

Nevertheless, that more common opinion seems more probable, at least when ordinary human conditions and dispositions are considered: both because of the authority and number of its defenders; because of the parity with the precept of eliciting an act of charity, which does not seem of itself to oblige except within a period of one year; and because the Church extends to one year her obligation of receiving the sacrament of confession. The reason and intention of this last provision is probably that men should satisfy, at least through receiving the sacrament, the general precept of repenting itself, which presses within the same period.

OBJECTION 3. St. Thomas (*Supplement*, q. 6, a. 5; that is, *On IV Sentences*, dist. 17, q. 3, a. 1, quaestiuncula 4, cited in Conclusion V, pp. 496 ff.) seems to teach that the precept of repenting obliges of itself only at the point of death.

REPLY. That does not necessarily follow from those words of the holy Doctor. Indeed, in the words immediately following in the same question 4, St. Thomas teaches that the precept of confession—and, for the same reason, the precept of contrition—obliges of itself not to defer confession where there is no reasonable cause for delay.

CONCLUSION VIII. The precept of Penance obliges accidentally in several circumstances, because other precepts indirectly require it; these circumstances can be reduced to one general heading, namely, the necessity of acquiring the state of grace in order to fulfill some pressing precept (*On IV Sentences*, dist. 17, q. 3, a. 1, quaestiuncula 4).

PROOF.

First, observe that other precepts influence accidentally, or require the execution of, the precept of Penance in two ways. In one way, as immediate and inseparable motives, or reasons why one must repent whenever one repents; of these we treated in Conclusion III (Note I), where it was said that a man is bound to repent not only from the intrinsic motive of justice toward God but also from the extrinsic motives of charity and mercy toward himself. In another way, as mediate and separable motives, or reasons why one must repent here and now; these fall under the present consideration, which concerns the time of repenting.

Now motives of this latter kind are reducible to only one heading and flow from one fundamental reason: the necessity of obtaining through an act of Penance the state of grace, without which the aforesaid precepts cannot be observed. Hence, with St. Thomas, the general rule is established: "A person is bound actually to make confession [or contrition] ... accidentally ... when he is bound to do something that he cannot ... do unless he has confessed [or has been contrite, that is, unless he is in the state of grace]" (*On IV Sentences*, dist. 17, q. 3, a. 1, quaestiuncula 4).

Theologians assign in particular the following cases. First case. The necessity of satisfying the precept of charity. For there can be a case in which the precept of charity presses before the precept of Penance itself presses of itself, as is clear at least in the case of a man who, upon coming to the use of reason, has omitted to convert himself to God as his ultimate end. Then, therefore, an accidental obligation to perform an act of contrition arises, without which the act of charity cannot be fulfilled, as was said in Conclusion V (pp. 498–500).

Second case. The necessity of performing some action which, by reason of its dignity and holiness, requires the state of grace in its subject, a state which can be obtained only by an act of contrition; for

example, when some sacrament must be received or administered.

Some, such as Marsilius, Angelus, Viguerius, and Petrus de Soto, have taught that the precept of repenting presses on feast days or more solemn days, for the purpose of sanctifying these days, according to the divine precept also expressed in Leviticus 16:30 ff.: "On this day shall be an expiation for you, and a cleansing from all your sins; ye shall be cleansed before the Lord. For it is a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls by perpetual religion" (cf. 23:3, 7, 21, 27–32). This opinion, however, is commonly rejected by theologians as lacking a foundation; for the end of a law does not fall under the law, especially if it be extrinsic. Now interior sanctification is only an extrinsic end of the law prescribing the sanctification of feast days; its immediate object, as is clear both from the precept of the Church and from the quoted precept of the Synagogue, is only the outward sanctification of those days by the observance of certain acts of worship.

Third case. The necessity of overcoming a grave temptation and thus of observing the precept of the virtue against which such temptation presses. For, since a grave temptation cannot be overcome without the state of grace (as the Thomists teach in the treatise *On Grace*), the precept by which we are bound to observe that virtue accidentally makes the precept of repenting urgent, so that through the act of Penance the necessary state of grace may be obtained.

Suárez and the Würzburg theologians, however, exclude this case as not practically applicable, because they teach that a man without habitual grace can overcome every temptation, even a grave one, with the assistance of actual grace alone. Unless, perhaps, they say, it is a question of a prolonged temptation; yet even this, Suárez adds, since it can never be established in the present and actual circumstances, and since actual helps can be hoped for at every time, can scarcely be understood to constitute a reason obliging one to an act of contrition.

Fourth case. The necessity of averting divine indignation and punishment from the whole community. For if private sins can arouse divine wrath against the whole community, private Penance can also avert it from the whole community. Hence the precept of charity can command and make urgent an obligation arising from the precept of Penance. This obligation, however, as Suárez rightly observes, must not be exaggerated, but should rather be restricted to some rare case, because, on the one hand, prayer can often be sufficient for the aforementioned purpose, since God also hears sinners; and, on the other, one can ordinarily presume that in the community several just and penitent souls are to be found, on whose account God's wrath is appeased.

AS REGARDS PRACTICE, having considered what was said in the three preceding Conclusions, note the following:

1. He who dies in sin without an act of contrition (or the reception of the sacrament) passes into the next life with a special sin of impenitence, in addition to the sin or sins committed against the other virtues.

2. He who, during the course of life, does not repent when the precept of repenting obliges of itself is likewise guilty of a special sin of impenitence (in addition to the sins committed against the other virtues). This sin, however, is one, and is not tripled by the three titles under which the one obligation to repent was imposed.

3. He who neither repents nor confesses within five years after committing a sin certainly sins (apart from the sin of omitting conversion); according to certain theologians he sins against charity, or violates the precept of Penance obliging accidentally; according to others, and in our judgment, he commits the sin of impenitence by violating the precept of Penance itself obliging of itself.

4. He who does not repent within a year is, according to our opinion, probably guilty of this same sin of impenitence, besides the violation of the ecclesiastical precept of annual confession; nevertheless, he does not commit a double sin, but one single sin of impenitence. For the two precepts of contrition and confession concur as though in one and the same disjunctive obligation to repent, either through the reception of the sacrament or through contrition with the desire for the sacrament; accordingly, although the omission of both is metaphysically double, morally it assumes the species of one sin only.

5. He who inculpably omits annual confession does not on that account inculpably omit contrition as well, but is bound at least to contrition; otherwise he commits the sin of impenitence.

6. He who does not satisfy the precept of Penance when it obliges only accidentally and by reason of another precept, whatever that precept may be —even the precept of charity—does not sin against the precept of Penance, but against the other precept which presses of itself; nor, therefore, does he commit the special sin of impenitence, but only one sin against the other precept or virtue, for example against charity, or against the sanctity of a sacrament sacrilegiously received. The reason is that in such a case the precept of Penance does not oblige properly and directly, but another precept does, whereas the act of Penance stands only as a means or a condition without which the other precept cannot be fulfilled; means, moreover, fall under the same formal obligation under which the end itself falls.

7. The violation of the precept of Penance obliging accidentally need not be accused in confession, not only because it is in itself and necessarily unknown, but especially because it does not constitute a special sin. The violation, however, of the precept of Penance obliging of itself, although it is a special sin and therefore matter for accusation, need not be anxiously investigated, nor should penitents be questioned specially about it. This is both because, as St. Alphonsus observes (cited above, p. 513), "sinners, especially the uninstructed, can for the most part, indeed almost always, be excused from this sin of deferred Penance by reason of inadvertence," and because, if there is question, as most commonly happens, of penitents who approach confession at least once in the year, it is quite probable, as we said above, that through annual confession they have also satisfied the precept of repenting. If, however, there is question of those who have omitted confession for several years, then from their very condition and confession it becomes known that the precept of Penance was transgressed. But if, as Lugo observes (disputation 7, section 11, no. 243), in a very rare or scarcely conceivable case this were not known and at the same time there were suspicion that the penitent was inexcusable, questioning would have to be undertaken.

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