

"by the only medicine available, which is satisfaction; penitency thrown out of men's hearts; the remembrance of that heaviest and last judgment clean banisht; the wounds of dying men, which should be healed, are covered; the stroke of death, which hath gone as deep as any bowels are to receive it, is overcast with the slight show of a cloudy look. From the altars<sup>k</sup> of Satan to the holy of the Lord men are not afraid to come even belching in a manner the sacrificed morsels they have eaten; yea, their jaws yet breathing out the irksome savour of their former contagious wickedness, they seize upon the blessed body of our Lord, nothing terrified with that dreadful commination, which saith<sup>l</sup>, 'Whosoever eateth and drinketh unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of Christ.' They vainly think it to be peace, which is gotten before they be purged of their faults, before their crime be solemnly confest, before their conscience be cleared by the sacrifice, and imposition of the priests' hands, and before they have pacified the indignation of God. Why term they that a favour, which is an injury? Wherefore cloak they impiety with the name of charitable indulgence? Such facility giveth not, but rather taketh away peace; and is itself another fresh persecution or trial, whereby that fraudulent enemy maketh a secret havock of such as before he had overthrown; and now to the end he may clean swallow them, he casteth sorrow in a dead sleep, putteth grief to silence, wipeth out the memory of faults newly done, smothereth the sighs that should arise<sup>l</sup> from a contrite spirit, drieth up eyes which ought to send forth rivers of tears, and permitteth not God to be pacified with full repentance, whom heinous and enormous crimes have displeased."

By this then we see, that in St. Cyprian's judgment, all absolutions are void, frustrate, and of no effect, without sufficient repentance first shewed; whereas contrariwise, if true and full satisfaction have gone before, the sentence of man here given is ratified of God in heaven, according to our Saviour's own sacred testimony, "Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted."

<sup>k</sup> altar E.<sup>l</sup> rise E.<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 27.

[9.]<sup>m</sup> By what works in the Virtue, and by what in the Discipline of Repentance, we are said to satisfy either God or men, cannot now be thought obscure. As for the inventors of sacramental satisfaction, they have both altered the natural order heretofore kept in the Church, by bringing in a strange preposterous course, to absolve before satisfaction be made, and moreover by this their misordered practice are grown into sundry errors concerning the end whereunto it is referred.

They imagine, beyond all conceit of antiquity, that when God doth remit sin and the punishment eternal thereunto belonging, he reserveth the torments of hell-fire, to be nevertheless endured for a time, either shorter or longer, according to the quality of men's crimes. Yet so that there is between God and man a certain composition (as it were) or contract, by virtue whereof works assigned by the priest to be done after absolution shall satisfy God, as touching the punishment which he otherwise would inflict for sin pardoned and forgiven<sup>n</sup>.

Now because they cannot assure any man, that if he perform what the priest appointeth it shall suffice; this (I say) because they cannot do, inasmuch as the priest hath no power to determine or define of equivalency between sins and satisfactions; (and yet if a penitent depart this life, the debt of satisfaction being either in whole or in part undischarged, they steadfastly hold that the soul must remain in unspeakable torment till all be paid :) therefore for help and mitigation in this case, they advise men to set certain copesmates on work, whose prayers and sacrifices may satisfy God for such souls

<sup>m</sup> ix. D.

<sup>n</sup> [Here the Dublin MS. goes on. "For against y<sup>e</sup> guiltines of sinne, and y<sup>e</sup> danger of everlasting condemnation thereby incurred, confession and absolution succeeding y<sup>e</sup> same, are, (as they take it,) a remedie sufficient, and therefore, what their penitentiaries doe thinck good to impose further, whether it be, a matter of Ave Marias dayly to be scored up, a journey of pilgrimage to bee undertaken, some few dishes of ordinarie dyet to be exchanged, offerings to be made att y<sup>e</sup> shrines of Saints, or a litle to be scraped of from men's superfluitie, for releife of poore people, as in liew or exchange w<sup>th</sup> God, whose Justice oweth us still (they say) notwithstanding our pardon, some temporall punishment, to be susteyned in y<sup>e</sup> life to come, except wee quitt ourselves here with workes of y<sup>e</sup> former kind, continued till y<sup>e</sup> ballance of God's most strict severity, shall finde y<sup>e</sup> paynes wee have taken, requivalent, with y<sup>e</sup> faults for which wee satisfye." All this passage Abp. Ussher has drawn lines through and across, with his pen; and noted in the margin, "(This followeth afterward, more properly, in the viith section of the next head, 'touching absolution.')" (See below, pp. 83, 84.)]

BOOK VI.  
Ch. v. 9.

as depart in debt. Hence have arisen the infinite pensions of their priests, the building of so many altars and tombs, the enriching of Churches with so many glorious and costly gifts, the bequeathing of lands and ample possessions to religious companies, even with utter forgetfulness of friends, parents, wife, children<sup>o</sup>, all natural affection giving place unto that desire, which men doubtful of their own estate have to deliver their souls from torment after death.

<sup>p</sup> The ground of satisfying<sup>q</sup> by the Pope's indulgences<sup>r</sup>.

Yet behold, even this being also done, how far forth it shall avail they are not sure; and therefore the last upshot unto all their former inventions is, that as every action of Christ did both merit for himself, and satisfy partly for the eternal, and partly for the temporal punishment due unto men for sin; so his saints have obtained the like privilege of grace, making every good work they do, not only meritorious in their own behalf, but satisfactory too for the benefit of others. Or if, having at any time grievously sinned, they do more to satisfy God than he in justice can exact or look for at their hands; the surplusage runneth to a common stock, out of which treasury, containing whatsoever Christ did by way of satisfaction for temporal punishment, together with the satisfactory force which resideth in all the virtuous works of saints, and in their satisfactions whatsoever doth abound, (I say,) "From hence they hold God satisfied for such arrearages as men behind in accompt discharge not by other means; and for disposition hereof, as it is their doctrine that Christ remitteth not eternal death without the priest's absolution, so without the grant of the Pope they cannot but teach it alike impossible<sup>s</sup> that souls in hell should receive any temporal release of pain; the sacrament of pardon from him being to this effect no less necessary, than the priest's absolution to the other." So that by this postern-gate cometh in the whole mart of papal indulgences<sup>1</sup>; a gain inestimable<sup>t</sup> unto him, to others a spoil; a scorn both to God and man. So many works of satisfaction pretended to be done by Christ, by saints, and martyrs; so many virtuous acts possessed with satisfactory force and virtue; so many

<sup>o</sup> and children E.  
<sup>r</sup> indulgence E (?)

<sup>p</sup> This marginal note om. E.

<sup>s</sup> impossible E. <sup>t</sup> unestimable E.

<sup>q</sup> satisfaction E. (?)

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 84.

BOOK VI.  
Ch. vi. 1, 2.

supererogations in satisfying beyond the exigence of their own necessity; and this that the Pope might make a monopoly of all, turning all to his own gain, or at the least to the gain of them<sup>u</sup> which are his own. Such facility they have to convert a pretended sacrament into a true<sup>x</sup> revenue.

VI.<sup>v</sup> Sin is not helped but by being assecured of pardon. It resteth therefore to be considered what warrant we have concerning forgiveness, when the sentence of man absolveth us from sin committed against God. At the words of our Saviour<sup>1</sup>, saying to the sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee," exception was taken by the Scribes, who secretly reasoned against him, "Is any able to forgive sins, but only God?" Whereupon they condemned his speech as blasphemy<sup>2</sup>; the rest, which believed him to be a Prophet sent from God, saw no cause wherefore he might not as lawfully say, and as truly, to whomsoever amongst them, "God hath taken away thy sins," as Nathan (they all knew) had used the very like speech; to whom David did not therefore impute blasphemy, but embraced, as became him, the words of truth with joy and reverence.

Of Absolution of Penitents.

Now there is no controversy but as God in that special case did authorize Nathan, so Christ more generally his Apostles and the ministers of his word in his name to absolve sinners. Their power being equal, all the difference between them can be but only in this, that whereas the one had prophetic evidence, the other have the certainty partly of faith, and partly of human experience, whereupon to ground their sentence: faith, to assure them of God's most gracious pardon in Heaven unto all penitents; and touching the sincerity of each particular party's repentance, as much as<sup>z</sup> outward sensible tokens or signs can warrant.

[2.]<sup>a</sup> It is not to be marvelled that so great a difference appeareth between the doctrine of Rome and ours, when we teach repentance. They imply in the name of repentance much more than we do. We stand chiefly upon the true<sup>b</sup> inward conversion of the heart; they more upon works of external show. We teach, above all things, that repentance which is one and the same from the beginning to the world's

<sup>u</sup> those E. <sup>x</sup> true om. E. <sup>v</sup> i. D. <sup>z</sup> much as om. E. <sup>a</sup> ii. D. <sup>b</sup> due E.

<sup>1</sup> Matt t. ix.

<sup>2</sup> Marc. v. 21. [ii. 7]; Luc. v. 21.

end ; they a sacramental penance of their own devising and shaping. We labour to instruct men in such sort, that every soul which is wounded with sin may learn the way how to cure itself ; they, clean contrary, would make all sores seem incurable, unless the priest have a hand in them.

Touching the force of whose absolution they strangely hold, that whatsoever the penitent doth, his contrition, confession, and satisfaction have no place of right to stand as material parts in this sacrament, nor consequently any such force as to make them available for the taking away of sin, in that they proceed from the penitent<sup>1</sup> himself without the privity of the minister, but only, as they are enjoined by the minister's authority and power. So that no contrition or grief of heart, till the priest exact it ; no acknowledgment of sins, but that which he doth demand ; no praying, no fasting, no alms, no recompense or restitution for whatsoever we have done, can help, except by him it be first imposed. It is the chain of their own doctrine, no remedy for mortal sin committed after baptism but the sacrament of penance only ; no sacrament of penance, if either matter or form be wanting ; no ways to make those duties a material part of the sacrament, unless we consider them as required and exacted by the priest. Our Lord and Saviour, they say, hath ordained his priests judges in such sort, that no man which sinneth after baptism can be reconciled unto God but by their sentence<sup>2</sup>. For why ? If there were any other way of reconciliation, the very promise of Christ should be false, in saying<sup>3</sup>, "Whatsoever ye bind "on earth, shall be bound in heaven ; and whose sins soever "ye retain, are retained<sup>4</sup>." Except therefore the priest be willing, God hath by promise so hampered himself<sup>5</sup>, that it is not now in his own power to pardon any man. Let him which hath offended crave as the publican did<sup>6</sup> ; "Lord, be thou

<sup>5</sup> hampered himself so E.

<sup>1</sup> "Ipsius (pœnitentis scil.) actio "non est pars sacramenti, nisi qua-

"tenus potestati sacerdotali subji-  
"tur, et a sacerdote dirigitur vel  
"jubetur." Bellarmin. de Pœnit.  
lib. i. c. 16. [t. iii. 942.]

<sup>2</sup> "Christus instituit sacerdotes  
"judices super terram cum ea po-  
"testate, ut, sine ipsorum sententia,  
"nemo post baptismum lapsus re-

"conciliari possit." Bellarmin. de  
Pœnit. lib. iii. c. 2. [t. iii. 1028.]

<sup>3</sup> [Matt. xviii. 18 ; John xx. 23.]

<sup>4</sup> "Quod si possent rei [ei E.]  
"sine sacerdotum sententia absolvi,  
"non [enim E.] esset vera Christi  
"promissio, Quæcunque," &c. Bel-  
larm. ibid. [p. 1031.]

<sup>6</sup> [Luke xviii. 13.]

"merciful to me a sinner ;" let him, as David, make a thousand times his supplication<sup>1</sup>, "Have mercy upon me, O God, ac-  
"cording to thy loving-kindness ; according to the multitude  
"of thy compassions<sup>2</sup> put away mine iniquities : "all this doth  
not help, till such time as the pleasure of the priest be known ;  
till he have signed us a pardon, and given us our *quietus est*,  
God himself hath no answer to make but such as that of his  
angel unto Lot, "I can do nothing<sup>3</sup>."

[3.]<sup>e</sup> It is true, that our Saviour by those words, "Whose  
"sins ye remit, they are remitted," did ordain judges over  
sinful souls, give them authority to absolve from sin, and pro-  
mise to ratify in heaven whatsoever they should do on earth  
in execution of this their office ; to the end that hereby, as well  
his ministers might take encouragement to do their duty with  
all faithfulness, as also his people admonition, gladly with  
all reverence to be ordered by them ; both parts knowing that  
the functions of the one towards the other have his perpetual  
assistance and approbation. Howbeit all this with two re-  
straints, which every jurisdiction in the world hath ; the one,  
that the practice thereof proceed in due order ; the other, that  
it do not extend itself beyond due bounds ; which bounds or  
limits have so confined penitential jurisdiction, that although  
there be given unto it power of remitting sin, yet not such  
sovereignty of power, that no sin should be pardonable in  
man without it. Thus to enforce our Saviour's words, is as  
though we should gather, that because whatsoever Joseph did  
command in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh's grant was<sup>f</sup>, it should  
be done ; therefore he granted<sup>g</sup> that nothing should be done  
in the land of Egypt but what Joseph did command, and so  
consequently, by enabling his servant Joseph to command  
under him, disableth himself to command any thing without  
Joseph.

But by this we see how the papacy maketh all sin unpar-  
donable, which hath not the priest's absolution ; except per-  
adventure in some extraordinary<sup>3</sup> case, where albeit absolu-  
tion be not had, yet it must be desired.

<sup>d</sup> compassion E.

<sup>e</sup> iii. D.

<sup>f</sup> is E.

<sup>g</sup> granteth E.

<sup>1</sup> [Psalm li. 1.]

<sup>2</sup> [Gen. xix. 22.]

<sup>3</sup> "Christus ordinariam suam  
"potestatem in apostolos transtulit ;

"extraordinariam sibi reservavit.

"Ordinaria enim remedia in Ec-

"clesia ad remittenda peccata sunt

"ab eo instituta, sacramenta ; sine

[4.]<sup>h</sup> What is then the force of absolution? What is it which the act of absolution worketh in a sinful man? Doth it by any operation derived from itself alter the state of the soul? Doth it really take away sin, or but ascertain us of God's most gracious and merciful pardon? The latter of which two is our assertion, the former theirs.

<sup>1</sup> At the words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, saying unto the sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee," the Pharisees, which knew him not to be the "Son of the living God," took secret exception, and fell to reasoning with themselves against him; "Is any able to forgive sins but God only?" "The sins," saith St. Cyprian, "that are committed against him, he alone hath power to forgive, which took upon him our sins, he which sorrowed and suffered for us, he whom the Father delivered unto death for our offences." Whereunto may be added that which Clemens Alexandrinus hath, "<sup>3</sup>Our Lord is profitable every way, every way beneficial, whether we respect him as man<sup>i</sup>, or as God; as God forgiving, as man instructing and learning how to avoid sin." For it is "<sup>4</sup>I, even I, that putteth away thine iniquities for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins," saith the Lord.

Now albeit we willingly confess with St. Cyprian, "The sins that are committed against him, he only hath power to forgive, who hath taken upon him our sins, he which hath sorrowed and suffered for us, he whom God hath given for our offences<sup>5</sup>:" yet neither did St. Cyprian intend to deny

<sup>h</sup> iv. D.<sup>i</sup> a man D.

"quibus peccata remittere Christus potest, sed extraordinarie et multo rarius hoc facit, quam per sacramenta. Noluit igitur homines [eos E.] extraordinariis remediis remissionis peccatorum confidere, quæ et rara sunt et incerta: sed ordinaria, et ut ita dicam, visibilia sacramentorum quærere remedia." Maldonat. in Matt. xvi. 19. [p. 343.]

<sup>1</sup> [The insertion of this paragraph here is probably a mistake; the whole of it except the quotation from St. Clement being found in other parts of this book.]

<sup>2</sup> Matt. ix. 2; Mark ii. 7; Luke v. 21; Cyp. de Laps. c. 11\*.

<sup>3</sup> Πάντα ὀνίνησιν ὁ Κύριος καὶ πάντα ὠφελεῖ, καὶ ὡς ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ὡς Θεός. Τὰ μὲν ἁμαρτήματα ὡς Θεὸς ἀφίει, εἰς δὲ τὸ μὴ ἐξαμαρτάνειν παιδαγωγῶν ὡς ἄνθρωπος. Clem. Alexandr. Pædag. lib. i. cap. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Esai. xliii. 25.

<sup>5</sup> "Veniam peccatis, quæ in ipsum commissa sunt, solus potest ille largiri, qui peccata nostra portavit, qui pro nobis doluit, quem Deus tradidit pro peccatis nostris." [de Laps. c. 11.]

\* 14. D.

the power of the minister, otherwise than if he presume beyond his commission to remit sin, where God's own will is it should be retained; for against such absolutions he speaketh (which being granted to whom they ought to have been denied, are of no validity;) and, if rightly it be considered how higher causes in operation use to concur with inferior means, his grace with our ministry, God really performing the same which man is authorized to act as in his name, there shall need for decision of this point no great labour.

[5.]<sup>k</sup> To remission of sins there are two things necessary; grace, as the only cause which taketh away iniquity; and repentance, as a duty or condition required in us. To make repentance such as it should be, what doth God demand but inward sincerity joined with fit and convenient offices for that purpose? the one referred wholly to our own consciences, the other best discerned by them whom God hath appointed judges in this court. So that having first the promises of God for pardon generally unto all offenders penitent; and particularly for our own unfeigned meaning, the unfallible<sup>1</sup> testimony of a good conscience; the sentence of God's appointed officer and vicegerent to approve with impartial judgment the quality of that we have done, and as from his tribunal, in that respect to assail us of any crime: I see no cause but that by the rules of our faith and religion we may rest ourselves very well assured touching God's most merciful pardon and grace; who, especially for the strengthening of weak, timorous, and fearful minds, hath so far endured his church with power to absolve sinners. It pleaseth God that men sometimes should, by missing this help, perceive how much they stand bound to him for so precious a benefit enjoyed. And surely, so long as the world lived in any awe or fear of falling away from God, so dear were his ministers to the people, chiefly in this respect, that being through tyranny and persecution deprived of pastors, the doleful rehearsal<sup>1</sup> of

<sup>k</sup> v. D.<sup>1</sup> unfallable E.

<sup>1</sup> Victor. de Persecut. Vandal. [lib. ii. ap. Bibl. Patr. Colon. t. v. pars iii. p. 655-6. Hunneric, king of the Arian Vandals in Africa, had by one edict driven into exile bishops, priests, deacons and other members of the church catholic to

the number of 4961. "Quantæ tunc multitudines de diversis regionibus et civitatibus ad visendos Dei martyres occurrerent populorum testantur viæ vel semitæ; quæ cum agmina venientium nequaquam caperent, per vertices

their lost felicities hath not any one thing more eminent, than that sinners distrest should not now know how or where to unlade their burthen. Strange it were unto me, that the Fathers, who so much every where extol the grace of Jesus Christ in leaving unto his Church this heavenly and divine power, should as men whose simplicity had generally<sup>m</sup> been abused, agree all to admire and magnify a needless office.

The sentence therefore of ministerial absolution hath two effects: touching sin, it only declareth us free<sup>n</sup> from the guiltiness thereof, and restored into God's favour<sup>o</sup>; but concerning right in sacred and divine mysteries, whereof through sin we were made unworthy, as the power of the Church did before effectually bind and retain us from access unto them, so upon our apparent repentance it truly restoreth our liberty, looseth<sup>p</sup> the chains wherewith we were tied, remitteth all whatsoever is past, accepteth us no less, returned, than if we never had gone astray.

For inasmuch as the power which our Saviour gave to his Church is of two kinds, the one to be exercised over voluntary penitents only, the other over such as are to be brought to amendment by ecclesiastical censure<sup>q</sup>; the words wherein he hath given this authority must be so understood, as the subject or matter whereupon it worketh will permit. It doth not permit that in the former kind, (that is to say, in the use of power over voluntary converts,) to bind or loose, remit or retain, should signify any other than only to pronounce of sinners according to that which may be gathered by outward signs; because really to effect the removal or continuance of sin in the soul of any offender<sup>r</sup>, is no priestly act, but a work which far exceedeth their ability<sup>s</sup>. Contrariwise, in the latter

<sup>m</sup> universally E.    <sup>n</sup> freed E.    <sup>o</sup> favours E.    <sup>p</sup> loosened D.    <sup>q</sup> censures E.  
<sup>r</sup> offenders D.    <sup>s</sup> habilitie D.

"montium et vallium occurrens  
"turba fidelium inestimabilis de-  
"scendebat, cereos manibus ge-  
"stantes, suosque infantulos vesti-  
"giis martyrum projicientes, ista  
"voce clamabant: 'Quibus nos  
"miseros relinquitis, dum pergitis  
"ad coronas? qui hos baptizaturi  
"sunt parvulos fontibus aquæ per-  
"ennis? qui nobis poenitentiae mu-  
"nus collaturi sunt, et reconcilia-

"tionis indulgentia obstrictos pec-  
"catorum vinculis soluturi? quia  
"vobis dictum est, 'Quaecunque  
"solveritis super terram erunt so-  
"luta et in coelis.' Qui nos solenni-  
"bus orationibus sepulturi sunt mo-  
"rientes? a quibus divini sacrificii  
"ritus exhibendus est consuetus?  
"vobiscum et nos licebat pergere, si  
"liceret ut tali modo filios a patri-  
"bus nulla necessitas separaret.]"

kind of spiritual jurisdiction, which by censures constraineth men to amend their lives; it is true, that the minister of God doth more than<sup>t</sup> declare and signify what God hath wrought. And this power, true it is, that the Church of Christ hath invested in it.

[6.]<sup>u</sup> Howbeit, as other truths, so this hath both by error been oppugned, and depraved through abuse. The first of name, that openly in writing withstood the Church's authority and power to remit sin, was Tertullian, after he had combined himself with Montanists, drawn to the liking of their heresy through the very sourness of his own nature, which neither his incredible skill and knowledge otherwise, nor the very doctrine of the gospel itself, could but so much alter, as to make him savour any thing which carried with it the taste of lenity. A sponge steeped in wormwood and gall, a man through too much severity merciless, and neither able to endure nor to be endured of any. His book entitled *Concerning Chastity*, and written professedly against the discipline of the Church, hath many fretful and angry sentences, declaring a mind very much offended with such as would not persuade themselves, that of sins, some be pardonable by the keys of the Church, some incapable of forgiveness<sup>1</sup>; that middle and moderate offences having received chastisement, may by spiritual authority afterwards be remitted, but greater transgressions must (as touching indulgence) be left to the only pleasure of Almighty God in the world to come<sup>2</sup>; that as idolatry and bloodshed, so likewise fornication and sinful lust

<sup>t</sup> then more E.

<sup>u</sup> vi. D.

<sup>1</sup> [De Pudicit. c. ii. "Causas poenitentiae delicta condicimus. Hæc dividimus in duos exitus. Alia erunt remissibilia, alia irremissibilia. . . . Secundum quod nemini dubium est alia castigationem mereri alia damnationem. Omne delictum aut venia expungit aut poena: venia ex castigatione; poena ex damnatione. . . . Secundum hanc differentiam delictorum, poenitentiae quoque conditio discriminatur. Alia erit, quæ veniam consequi possit, in delicto scilicet remissibili. Alia, quæ consequi nullo modo possit, in delicto

"scilicet irremissibili." And, c. xviii. "Poenitentia ad se clementiam invitat, salva illa poenitentiae specie post fidem, quæ aut levioribus delictis veniam ab episcopo consequi poterit, aut majoribus et irremissibilibus a Deo solo." <sup>2</sup> [Ibid. c. iii. "Ad Dominum remissa [Poenitentia] et illi exinde prostrata, hoc ipso magis operabitur veniam, quod eam a solo Deo exorat, quod delicto suo humanam pacem sufficere nec credit, quod Ecclesiae mavult erubescere quam communicare.]"