are of this nature; that they which so far are fallen from God, ought to continue for ever after barred from access unto his sanctuary, condemned to perpetual profusion of tears, deprived of all expectation and hope to receive any thing at the Church's hands, but publication of their shame.

For," saith he, "who will fear to waste out that which he hopeth he may recover? Who will be careful for ever to hold that, which he knoweth cannot for ever be withheld from him? He which slackeneth the bridle to sin, doth thereby give it even the spur also. Take away fear, and that which presently succeedseth thereof is licentious desire. Greater offences therefore are punishable, but not pardonable, by the Church. If any Prophet or Apostle be found to have omitted such transgressions, they did it not by the ordinary course of discipline, but by extraordinary power. For they also raised the dead, which none but God is able to do; they restored impotent and lame men, a work peculiar to Jesus Christ; yea, that which Christ would not do, because executions of such severity beseemed not him who came to save and redeem the world by his sufferings, they by their power struck Elymas and Ananias, the one blind, and the other dead. Approve first yourselves as to be they were the impotent E.

"Apostles or Prophets, and then take upon you to pardon all men. But if the authority you have be only ministerial, and no way sovereign, over-reach not the limits which God hath set you; know that to pardon capital sin is beyond your commission.

Howbeit, as oftentimes the vices of wicked men do cause other their commendable qualities to be abhorred, so the honour of great men's virtues is easily a cloak to their errors. In which respect Tertullian hath past with much less obloquy and reprehension than Novatian; who, broaching afterwards the same opinion, had not otherwise wherewith to countervail the offence he gave, and to procure it the like toleration. Novatian, at the first a stoical philosopher, (which kind of men hath always accounted stupidity the highest top of wisdom, and comministration the deadliest sin,) became by institution and study the very same which the other had been before through a secret natural distemper, upon his conversion to the Christian faith and recovery from sickness, which moved him to receive the sacrament of Baptism in his bed. The bishop contrary to the canons of the Church would needs in special love towards him ordain him presbyter, which favour satisfied not him who thought himself worthy of greater place and dignity. He closed therefore with a number of well-minded men, and not suspicious what his secret purposes were, and having made them sure unto him by fraud, procureth his own consecration to be their bishop. His prelacy now was able as he thought to countenance what he intended to publish, and therefore his letters went presently abroad to sundry churches, advising them never to admit to the fellowship of holy mysteries such as had after baptism offered sacrifice to idols.

There was present at the council of Nice, together with other bishops, one Aecius a Novatianist, touching whose diversity in opinion from the Church the emperor desirous to hear some reason, asked of him certain questions; for answer whereunto Aecius weaveth out a long history of things that...
yet practically, a Relaxation of Discipline.

happened in the persecution under Decius, and of men, which to save life forsook faith. But the end was a certain bitter canon framed in their own school; "That men which fall into deadly sin after holy baptism, ought never to be again admitted to the communion of divine mysteries; that they are to be exhorbed unto repentance, howbeit not to be put in hope that pardon can be had at the priest's hands; but with God, which hath sovereign power and authority in himself to remit sins, it may be in the end they shall find mercy."

Those followers of Novatian, which gave themselves the title of καθαροί, clean, pure, and unsotted men, had one point of Montanism more than their master did profess; for amongst sins unpardonable they reckoned second marriages, of which opinion Tertullian making (as his usual manner was) a salt apology, "Such is," saith he, "our stony hardness, that defacing our Comforter with a kind of enormity in discipline, we dam up the doors of the church no less against twice-married men than against adulterers and fornicators." Of this sort therefore it was ordained by the Nicene Synod, that if any such did return to the catholic and apostolic unity, they should in writing bind themselves to observe the orders of the Church, and communicate as well with them which had been often married, or had fallen in time of persecution, as with other sorts of Christian people. But further to relate, or at all to refle the errors of misbelieving men concerning this point, is not now to our present purpose greatly necessary.

[7.]The Church may receive no small detriment by corrupt practice, even there where doctrine concerning the substance of thirgs practised is free from any great or dangerous v. vii. D.

*[De æra de χορ τον μετα τα βάστασα ημαρτήσεως διαμορίαν, ἢν προς δόματον κολίςων ο νοίς γραφαὶ τῆς κοινωνίας τῶν θείων κυρίων ἐν οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἀλλ' ἐν ἑαυτοῖς μετάμοιραι μέν αὐτοὺς προστάται ἢ πεποίηται διὰ τῆς άφετης μή πάρα τῶν ἅριεν ἀλλ' πάρα τοῦ θεοῦ εὐδοξίας, τοῦ δυνάμενος καὶ ἑξοφόρων ἐχοντος συγχρώματι διαμορίας. Socr. l. 13.]*

[De Pudic. c. i. fin. : vid. supr. note 2, p. 86.]

[Cam. viii. Περὶ τῶν ἱσομαζόν-

tων μὲν ἕνατοις καθαροῖς πιστεύν, προσκυνομένους δὲ τῇ καθολικῇ ἐκ-

ἀλλα σιδα τῇ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ ἐκκλησία, πρὸ πάντων δὲ τοῦτο ἀκολουθησάς ἀπὸ εὐθυγραμμος προσκυνεῖ, ὡς συνδημιύρως καὶ ἀκαλόθως τοῖς τῆς καθο-

λικῆς ἀκατορτίκης ἐκκλησίας δώ-

ματι τοὺν ἑτοντα καὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ διαιγμα παρει-

πασιώτητας. Conc. ii. 32.]

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ματι τοὺν ἑτοντα καὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ διαιγμα παρει-

πασιώτητας. Conc. ii. 32.*

*absolution E. * not E. b practices E. * also in them E. d al. impose. Archbishop Usher in MS. D, over the word in line. His authority for the correction was probably the use of the word in the same MS. where this passage had before occurred: see above, c. v. § 9. p. 71.
Threefold effect of Sin curable by God only:

whether it be a number of Ave-Maries daily to be scored up, a journey of pilgrimage to be undertaken, some few dishes of ordinary diet to be exchanged, offerings to be made at the shrines of saints, or a little to be scraped off from men's superfluity for relief of poor people, all is in lieu or exchange with God, whose justice, notwithstanding our pardon, yet oweth us still some temporal punishment, either in this or in the life to come, except we quit it ourselves here with works of the former kind, and continued till the balance of God's most strict severity shall find the pains we have taken equivalent with the sufferings we should endure, or else that the mercy of the pope relieve us. And at this postern gate cometh in the whole mart of papal indulgences, so infinitely strewed that the pardon of sin, which heretofore was obtained hardly and by much suit, is with them become now almost impossible to be escaped.

[8.] To set down then the force of this sentence in absolving penitents; there are in sin these three things: the act which passeth away and vanisheth; the pollution whereby it leaveth the soul defiled; and the punishment whereunto they are made subject that have committed it. The act of sin, is every deed, word, and thought against the law of God. "For sin is the transgression of the law;" and although the deed itself do not continue, yet is that bad quality permanent, whereby it maketh the soul unrighteous and deformed in God's sight. "From the heart" come evil cogitations, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, slanders; these are things which delibe a man. They do not only, as effects of impurity, argue the nest to be unclean, out of which they came, but as causes they strengthen that disposition unto wickedness which brought them forth; they are both fruits and seeds of uncleanness, they nourish the root out of which they grow, they breed that iniquity which bred them. The blot therefore of sin abideth, though the act be transitory. And out of both ariseth a present debt, to endure what punishment soever the evil which we have done deserveh;

Declaratory Power of the Church's Absolution.

an obligation, in the chains whereof sinners by the justice of Almighty God continue bound till repentance loose them. "Repent this thy wickedness," saith Peter unto Simon Magus, "beseech God, that if it be possible the thought of thine heart may be pardoned; for I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." In like manner Solomon: "The wicked shall be held fast in the cords of his own sin."

Nor doth God only bind sinners hands and foot by the dreadful determination of his own unsearchable judgment against them; but sometime also the Church bindeth by the censures of her discipline: so that when offenders upon their repentance are by the same discipline absolved, the Church looseth but her own bands, the chains wherein she had tied them before.

The act of sin God alone remitteth, in that his purpose is never to call it to account, or to lay it unto men's charge; the stain he washeth out by the sanctifying grace of his Spirit; and concerning the punishment of sin, as none else hath power to cast body and soul into hell-fire, so none power to deliver either besides him. As for the ministerial sentence of private absolution, it can be no more than a declaration what God hath done; it hath but the force of the Prophet Nathan's absolution, "God hath taken away thy sin;" than which construction, especially of words judicial, there is not any thing more vulgar. For example, the publicans are said in the Gospel to have justified God; the Jews in Malachi to have blessed proud men, which sin and prosper; not that the one did make God righteous, or the other the wicked happy: but to "bless," to "justify," and to "absolve," are as commonly used for words of judgment or declaration, as of true and real efficacity. Yea even by the

1 Acts viii. 22. 
2 Prov. vi. 22. 
3 Pars i. art. i. q. 3. [p. 240 e. Rom. 1566.] 
4 Sacerdotes opus justitiae exercent. 
5 Sent. lib. iv. dis. 8. [c. 5. fol. 178. Basil 1515.] 
6 Acts vii. 60; Mic. vii. 19. 
7 1 Cor. vi. 11; Tit. iii. 5. 
8 Luke xii. 5; Matt. x. 28. 
10 Mal. iii. 15.
BOOK VI. opinion of the Master of Sentences, "it may be soundly affirmed and thought that God alone doth remit and retain sins, although he have given the Church power to do both: but he one way, and the Church another. He only by himself forgiveth sin, who cleanseth the soul from inward blemish, and looseth the debt of eternal death. So great a privilege he hath not given unto his priests, who notwithstanding are authorized to loose and bind, that is to say, to declare who are bound, and who are loosed. For albeit a man be already cleared before God, yet he is not in the face of the Church so taken, but by virtue of the priest's sentence; who likewise may be said to bind by imposing satisfactions, and to loose by admitting to the holy communion."

Saint Hierome also, whom the Master of the Sentences allegeth for more countenance of his own opinion, doth no less plainly and directly affirm: "That as the priests of the law could only discern, and neither cause nor remove leprosies, so the ministers of the Gospel, when they retain or remit sin, do but in the one judge how long we continue guilty, and in the other declare when we are clear or free." For there is nothing more apparent, than that the discipline

m power to the Church E. n to E. o in the Church of God so E. p satisfaction E. q

of repentance both public and private was ordained as an outward mean to bring men to the virtue of inward conversion; so that when this by manifest tokens did seem effect, absolution ensuing (which could not make) served only to declare men innocent.

[9] But the cause wherefore they are so stiff, and have forsaken their own master in this point, is for that they hold the private discipline of penitency to be a sacrament, absolution an external sign in this sacrament, the signs external of all sacraments in the New Testament to be both causes of that which they signify, and signs of that which they truly cause.

To this opinion concerning sacraments they are now tied by expounding a canon in the Florentine council according to a former scholastical invention received from Thomas. For his device it was, that the mercy of God, which useth sacraments as instruments whereby to work, endeth them at the time of their administration with supernatural force and ability to induce grace into the souls of men; even as the axe and saw do serve to bring timber into that fashion which the mind of the artificer intendeth. His conceit

i ix. D. j ecclesiastical E. k doth seem E. l concept E.

in ipsa anima, qui primo corre- spondet sacramentis, sine est cha- racter, vel aliquid hujusmodi. Ad ultimum autem effectus, qui est gratia, non pertingit etiam in- strumentaliter, nisi dispositivus, in quantum hoc, ad quod instru- mentaliter effectus pertingit, est dispositio, que est necessitas, quantum in se est, ad gratias sus- ceptionem. Et quia omne instru- mentum agendo actionem natu- ralem, que competit sibi in qua- tum est res quaedam, pertingit ad effectus, qui competit sibi in quantum est instrumentum, sicut dolabrum dividendum scire acumen pertingit instrumentaliter ad for- mam scannii; ideo etiam materi- ale elementum exercendoactionem naturalem, secundum quam est signum interioris effectus, per- tingit ad interiorum effectum instru- mentaliter. Et hoc est quod Augustinus dicit, quod aqua bap- tismi corpus tangit, et cor ablu-
have, is a sensible and divine instruction. But had it pleased
him not to hoodwink his own knowledge, I nothing doubt
but he fully saw how to answer himself; it being a matter
very strange and incredible, that one which with so great
diligence had winnowed his adversaries’ writings, should be
ignorant of their minds. For, even as in the person of our
Lord Jesus Christ both God and man, when his human
nature is by itself considered, we may not attribute that unto
him, which we do and must ascribe as of itself as respect is had
unto both natures combined; so because in sacraments there
are two things distinctly to be considered, the outward sign,
and the secret concurrence of God’s most blessed Spirit, in
which respect our Saviour hath taught that water and the
Holy Ghost are combined to work the mystery of new birth;
sacraments therefore as signs have only those effects before
mentioned; but of sacraments, in that by God’s own will and
ordinance they are signs assisted always with the power of
the Holy Ghost, we acknowledge whatsoever either the
places of Scripture, or the authorities of councils and fathers,
or the proofs and arguments of reason which he allegeth, can
shew to be wrought by them. The elements and words have
power of infallible signification, for which they are called
seals of God’s truth; the spirit affixed unto those elements
and words, power of operation within the soul, most admirable,
divine, and impossible to be express. For so God hath
instituted and ordained, that, together with due administration
and receipt of sacramental signs, there shall proceed
from himself grace effectual to sanctify, to cure, to comfort,
and whatsoever is else is for the good of the souls of men.

Howbeit this opinion is Thomas rejecteth, under pretence
that it maketh sacramental words and elements to be in
themselves no more than signs, whereas they ought to be
held as causes of that they signify. He therefore reformeth

1 John iii. 5. [om. E.]
2 [Semper memoria repentinum
3 [He modus non transcendit
4 instrumentales esse conferendae
5 [novae Legis non solum significant
6 [sem caustus gratiam. [Summ. Theol.] pars iii. q. 62 art. 1. [xii. 192]