Manner in which Sacraments confer Grace:

...it with this addition, that the very sensible parts of the Sacraments do instrumentally effect and produce, not grace (for the schoolmen both of these times and long after did for the most part maintain it untrue, and some of them impossible, that sanctifying grace should efficiently proceed but from God alone, and that by immediate creation as the substance of the soul doth) but the phantasy which Thomas had was, that sensible things through Christ and the priest's benediction receive a certain supernatural transitory force, which leaveth behind it a kind of preparative quality or beauty within the soul, whereupon immediately from God doth ensue the grace that justifieth.

Now they which pretend to follow Thomas, differ from him in two points. For first, they make grace an immediate effect of the outward sign, which he for the dignity and excellency thereof was afraid to do. Secondly, whereas he to produce but a preparative quality in the soul, did imagine God to create in the instrument a supernatural gift or ability; they confess, that nothing is created, infused, or any way inherent, either in the word or in the elements; nothing that giveth them instrumental efficacy, but God's mere motion or application. Are they able to explain unto us, or themselves

habititie D; habilitie E.


2 [Tho. Aquin. de Verit. 27. art. 3.] * Necessis est ponere aliquam virtutem supernaturalem in Sacramentis. [Aquin. in] Sent. iv. d. 1. q. 1. art. iv. [fol. 4. g.] * Sacramen-

not by Endowment of the Sign with any physical Virtue.

to conceive, what they mean when they thus speak? For example, let them teach us, in the sacrament of Baptism, what it is for water to be moved till it bring forth grace. The application thereof by the minister is plain to sense; the force which it hath in the mind, as a moral instrument of information or instruction, we know by reason; and by faith we understand how God doth assist it with his Spirit: whereupon ensueth the grace which Saint Cyprian did in himself observe, saying, "After the bath of regeneration having scoured out the stained foulness of former life, supernatural light had entrance into the breast which was purified and cleansed for it: after that a second nativity had made me another man, by inward receipt of the Spirit from heaven; things doubtful began in marvellous manner to appear certain, that to be open which lay hid, darkness to shine like the clear light, former hardness to be made facility, impossibility easiness: insomuch as it might be discerned how that was earthly, which before had been carnally bred, and lived, given over unto sins; that now God's own, which the Holy Ghost did quicken."

[11.] Our opinion is therefore plain unto every man's understanding. We take it for a very good speech which Bonaventure hath uttered in saying, "Heed must be taken, that while we ascribe too much to the bodily signs in way of their commendation, we withdraw not the honour which is due to the cause which worketh in them, and the soul which receiveth them:" whereunto we conformably teach, that the outward sign applied hath of itself no natural efficacy towards grace, neither doth God put it into any unnatural

me om. E.

1 Ad Donat. c. 3. 4. [Postquam unde genitalis auxilio superioris avit labi deerta, in expiatorum pecus serenum, ac plorum desuper,] quod prius carnali natura debeat; licet obnoxium vivere, Dei esse hominem natiu succedat, omne sinum in modum putat unum. [c. 14. 4. p. 12.] "Cavendum est ne quid quod prius difficile videbatur, quod prius difficile videtur, quod prius in modum putabatur, ut esset agnoscerre termenius finisse quod prius carnali natura debeat; licet obnoxium vivere, Dei esse hominem natiu succedat, omne sinum in modum putat unum. [c. 14. 4. p. 12.]" * Epl. 2. D.

2 xi. D.
inherent virtue. And, as I think, we thus far avouch no more than they themselves confess to be very true.

If any thing displease them, it is because we add to these premisses another assertion; that with the outward sign God joineth his Holy Spirit, and so the whole instrument of God bringeth that to pass, whereunto the baser and meaner part could not extend. As for operations through the motions of signs, they are dark, intricate, and obscure; perhaps possible; howbeit, not proved either true or likely, by alleging that the touch of our Saviour's garment restored health, clay sight, when he applied it. Although ten thousand such examples should be brought, they overthrow not this one principle; that, where the instrument is without inherent virtue, the effect must necessarily proceed from the only agent's adherent power.

It passeth a man's conceit how water should be carried into the soul with any force of divine motion, or grace proceed but merely from the influence of God's Spirit. Notwithstanding if God did himself teach his Church in this case to believe that which he hath not given us capacity to comprehend, how incredible soever it may seem, yet our wits should submit themselves, and reason give place unto faith therein. But they yield it to be no question of faith, how grace doth proceed from sacraments; if in general they be acknowledged true instrumental causes, by the ministry whereof men receive divine grace; and that they which impute grace to the only operation of God himself, concerning with the external sign, do no less acknowledge the true efficacy of the sacrament, than they that ascribe the same to the quality of the sign

* virtue om. E.

1 Luke xviii. [viii.]; John ix.
2 Bellarm. de Sacr. in genere, lib. ii. c. i. [Having quoted Luther for the words, "Omnis in hoc con-cedunt, sacramenta esse efficaciam insigni gratiae," he goes on, "Hoc sufficit ad fidem, et ad legitimum quod Sacramentorum; quomodo in miraculis Christi non requirentur, ut homines qui curandum sit scient in quo genere cause fimbria Christi sanaret;... neque opus erat ut ipsi Apostoli, qui manus imponendo curabant, scient quomodo id fieret: ita quique "nor est necessa ut vel ministri vel qui suscipiunt sacramenta sciant quomodo Sacramenta sint causa justificationis."]
4 The obvious corruption of the text here may perhaps be rightly removed by leaving out the word "which."

applied, or to the motion of God applying, and so far carrying it, till grace be thereby not created, but extracted out of the natural possibility of the soul. Nevertheless this last philosophical imagination (if I may call it philosophical,) which useth the terms, but overthroweth the rules of philosophy, and hath no article of faith to support it, but whatsoever it be, they follow it in a manner all; they cast off the first opinion, wherein is most perspicuity and strongest evidence of certain truth.

The Council of Florence and Trent, defining that sacraments contain and confer grace, the sense whereof (if it liked them) might so easily conform itself with the same opinion, which they drew without any just cause quite and clean the other way, making grace the issue of bare words in such sacraments as they have framed destitute of any visible element, and holding it the offspring as well of elements as of words in those sacraments where both are, but in no sacrament acknowledging grace to be the fruit of the Holy Ghost working with the outward sign and not by it; in such sort as Thomas himself teacheth; that the Apostle's imposition of hands caused not the coming of the Holy Ghost, which notwithstanding was bestowed together with the exercise of that ceremony; yea, by it, (as the Evangelist,) to wit, as by a mean which came between the true agent and the effect, but not otherwise.
Many of the ancient Fathers, presupposing that the faithful before Christ had not till the time of his coming that perfect life and salvation which they looked for and we possess, thought likewise their sacraments to be but prefigurations of that which ours in present do exhibit. For which cause the Florentine council comparing the one with the other, saith, "That the old did only shadow grace, which was afterward to be given through the passion of Jesus Christ." But the after-wit of later days hath found out another more exquisite distinction, that evangelical sacraments are causes to effect grace, through motion of signs legal, according to the same signification and sense wherein evangelical sacraments are held by us to be God's instruments for that purpose. For howsoever Bellarmine hath shrunk up the Lutherans' sinews, and cut off our doctrine by the skirts; Allen, although he term us heretics, according to the usual bitter venom of his proud style, doth yet ingenuously confess, that the old schoolmen's doctrine and ours is one concerning sacramental efficacy, derived from God himself assisting by promise those outward signs of elements and words, out of which their schoolmen of the newer mint are so desirous to hatch grace. Where God doth work and use these outward means, wherein he neither findeth nor planteth force and aptness towards his intended purpose, such means are but signs to bring men to the consideration of his own omnipotent power, which without the use of things sensible would not be marked. At the time therefore when he giveth his heavenly grace, he applieth by the hands of his ministers that which betokeneth the same; nor only betokeneth, but, being also accompanied for ever with such power as doth truly work, is in that respect termed God's instrument, a true efficient cause of grace; a cause not in itself, but only by connexion of that which is in itself a cause, namely God's own strength and power. Sacraments, that is to say, the outward signs in sacraments, work nothing till they be blessed and sanctified of God. But what is God's heavenly benediction and sanctification, saving only the association of his Spirit? Shall we say that sacraments are like magical signs, if thus they have their effect? Is it magic for God to manifest by things sensible what he doth, and to do by his own most glorious Spirit really what he manifesteth in his sacraments? the delivery and administration whereof remaineth in the hands of mortal men, by whom, as by personal instruments, God doth apply signs, and with signs inseparably join his Spirit, and through the power of his Spirit work grace. The first is by way of concomitance and consequence to deliver the rest also that either accompany or ensue.

It is not here, as in cases of mutual commerce, where diverse persons have divers acts to be performed in their own behalf; a creditor to shew his bill, and a debtor to pay his money. But God and man do here meet in one action upon a third, in whom, as it is the work of God to create grace, so is it his work by the hand of the minister to apply a sign which should betoken, and his work to annex, that Spirit, which shall effect it. The action therefore is but one, God the author thereof, and man a cooperart by him assigned to work for, with, and under him. God the giver of grace by the outward ministry of man, so far forth as he authorizeth man to apply the sacraments of grace in the soul, which he alone worketh, without either instrument or co-agent.

[12.] Whereas therefore with us the remission of sin is inscribed unto God, as a thing which proceedeth from him only, and presently followeth upon the virtue of true repentance appearing in man; that which we attribute to the virtue,
they do not only impute to the sacrament of repentance, but having made repentance a sacrament, and thinking of sacraments as they do, they are enforced to make the ministry of his priests and their absolution a cause of that, which the sole omnipotency of God worketh.

And yet, for mine own part, I am not able well to conceive how their doctrine, that human absolution is really a cause out of which our deliverance from sin doth ensue, can cleave with the council of Trent, defining1, "That contrition perfected with charity doth at all times itself reconcile offenders to God, before they come to receive actually the sacrament of penance:" how it can stand with those discourses of the learnedest rabbins, which grant2, "That whosoever turneth "unto God with his whole heart, hath immediately his sins "taken away; that if a man3 be truly converted, his pardon "can neither be denied nor delayed:" it doth not stay for the priest's absolution, but presently followeth. Surely, if every contrite sinner, in whom there is charity and a sincere conversion of heart, have remission of sins given him before he seek it at the priest's hands; if reconciliation to God be a present and immediate sequel upon every such conversion or change: it must of necessity follow, seeing no man can be a true penitent or contrite which doth not both love God and sincerely abhor sin, that therefore they all before absolution attain forgiveness; whereunto notwithstanding absolution is pretended a cause so necessary, that sin without it, except in some rare extraordinary case, cannot possibly be remitted. Shall absolution be a cause producing and working that effect which is always brought forth without it, and had before absolution be sought4? But when they which are thus beforehand pardoned of God shall come to be also assailable by the

1 Conc. Trid. Sess. xiv. c. 4: "Tocet... et... contritionem hanc aliquando caritate perfectam esse contingat, hominemque Deo recconciliare, priscusq... hoc sacramentum actu suscipiatur; ipsam nihilominus reconciliationem ipsi contritioni sine sacramenti voto, quod in illa includitur, non esse ascribendum." t. xiv. 817.

2 Bellarm. de Posit. lib. ii. c. 13: "Scriptura passim docet, eos qui tuto corde ad Dominum convertunt sine mora veniam peccatorum accepere." "Verum conversionem nullas passim veniae moras, proinde continuo remittit contritum peccata etiam antequam absolutionem ascendet." 1 D.

3 Bellarm. de Posit. lib. ii. c. 13: "Scriptura passim docet, eos qui tuto corde ad Dominum convertunt sine mora veniam peccatorum accepere." "Verum conversionem nullas passim veniae moras, proinde continuo remittit contritum peccata etiam antequam absolutionem ascendet." 1 D.

4 Summ. qu. 54. art. 3. resp. ad 5.

Absurdity of supposing Contrition

BOOK VI.
Ch. vi. 12.

action whereby men are really purged from sin. Secondly, that even where contrition or inward repentance doth cleanse without absolution, the reason why it cometh so to pass is¹, because such contrites intend and desire absolution, though they have it not. Which two things granted; the one, that absolution given maketh them contrite that are not, the other, that even in them which are contrite, the cause why God remitteth sin is the purpose or desire they have to receive absolution²; we are not to stand against a sequel so clear and manifest as this, that always remission of sin proceedeth from absolution either had or desired.

But should a reasonable man give credit to their bare conceit, and because their positions have driven them to imagine absolving of insufficiently-disposed penitents to be a real creating of further virtue in them, must all other men think it true?² Let them cancel henceforward and blot out of all their books those old cautions touching necessity of wisdom³, lest priests should inconsiderately absolve any man in whom there were not apparent tokens of true repentance⁴; which to do was, in Cyprian's⁵ judgment, "pestilent deceit "and flattery, not only not available, but hurtful to them that "had transgress; a frivolous, frustrate and false peace, such as "caused the unrighteous to trust to a lie, and destroyed them "unto whom it promised safety." What needeth observation whether penitents have worthiness and bring contrition, if the words of absolution do infuse contrition? Have they borne us all this while in hand that contrition is a part of the

¹ due E.
² St. Cyprian's E.
³ "Dum accedit vere contritus
⁴ propter Deum, illa etiam contritio
⁵ non est contrito, nisi quatenus
⁶ prus natura informentur gratia per
⁷ Sacramentum in voto." Soto, Sent.
⁸ iv. dist. 14. q. 1. art. i.
⁹ "Legitima contritio votum Sac-
¹⁰ ramenti pro suo tempore debet
¹¹ inducere, atque adeo in virtute
¹² futuri Sacramenti peccata remit-
¹³ tit." Idem, art. iii. [p. 350.]
¹⁴ "Tunc sententia sacerdotis ju-
¹⁵ dicio Dei et totius celestis curiae
¹⁶ approbarit, et confirmatur, cum
¹⁷ ita ex discretione procedit, ut
¹⁸ reorum merita non contradicentur.
¹⁹ "Quosquaque
²⁰ ergo solvunt vel liganth adhibentes
²¹ clavem discretionis reorum meri-
²² tis, solvunt vel liganth in celis: i.e.
²⁴ "Non est periculosum sacer-
²⁵ doti dicere, Ego te absolvo, illis
²⁶ in quibus signa contritionis videt,
²⁷ que sunt dolor, de praeteritis, et
²⁸ propositum de caetero non pec-
²⁹ candi; alias absolvere non de-
³⁰ bet." Tho. Opusc. 22. [c. 3. t.
³¹ xvii. p. 195.]
³² "Cypr. de Lapsis. [See above,
³³ p. 69, note 2.]

an Effect of the Priest's Absolution.

BOOK VI.
Ch. vi. 13.

matters of their sacrament⁶, a condition or preparation of the mind towards grace to be received by absolution in the form of their sacrament? and must we now believe that the form doth give the matter? that absolution bestoweth contrition, and that the words do make presently of Saul, David; of Judas, Peter? For what was the penitency of Saul and Judas, but plain attrition; horror of sin through fear of punishment, without any loving sense, or taste of God's mercy?

¹Their other fiction, imputing remission of sin to desire of absolution from the priest, even in them which are truly contrite, is an evasion somewhat more witty, but no whit more possible for them to prove. Belief of the world and judgment to come, faith in the promises and sufferings of Christ for mankind, fear of his majesty, love of his mercy, grief for sin, hope for pardon, suit for grace; these we know to be the elements of true contrition: suppose that besides all this, God did also command that every penitent should seek his absolution at the priest's hands; where so many causes are concurring unto one effect, have they any reason to impute the whole effect unto one? any reason in the choice of that one, to pass by faith, fear, love, humility, hope, prayer, whatsoever else, and to enchargen above them all a desire of absolution from the priest, as if, in the whole work of man's repentance, God did regard and accept nothing, but for and in consideration of this? Why doth the Tridentine council impute it to charity⁷, "that contrites are reconciled in God's "sight before they receive the sacrament of penance," if desired absolution be the true cause?

But let this pass how it will; seeing the question is not, what virtues⁸ God may accept in penitent sinners, but what grace absolution actually given doth really bestow upon them. If it were, as they will have it, that God, regarding the humiliation of a contrite spirit, because there is joined therewith a lowly desire of the sacrament of priestly absolution, pardonneth immediately and forgiveth all offences; doth this any thing help to prove that absolution received afterward* sacraments D. ¹xiv. D. *virtue E. *afterwards D.

¹ [Sess. xiv. c. 4 : vid. supr. p. 96, note 1.]