

abusing the powers of our soul, and the faculties of our body. 2. *My fault*, as having sinned against our neighbour, by ill example given, or injuries done. 3. *My most grievous fault*, as having sinned against God, by breaking his commands. Against the Father by slighting his power; against the Son, by neglecting the means he has procured for our salvation; against the Holy Ghost, by ingratitude and wilful folly. And, can anything be more reasonable, than that a threefold cause should have a threefold effect of sorrow?

True it is, from God alone we hope for pardon, and therefore we confess to him; nevertheless, in offending God, we offend his angels, his saints, and all who love him; and therefore we confess to them also, and beg pardon of them all, as did the prodigal, saying, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee." *Luke 15, 18.* Or, confessing to God, before them all, we pray, they witness our sorrow, and beg of him remission for us; that as we have given them cause of displeasure or sadness, by our manifold iniquities; so we may give them cause of joy, by our conversion. *Luke 15, 10.*

Again, the priest and the faithful being now going to the great sacrifice of peace, it is requisite they confess to one another, asking,\* in a manner, each other's pardon, and mutually requiring each other's prayers. 'Confess therefore your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be saved.' *James 5, 16.*

Now, in the performance of this mutual obligation, as the priest styles the people, brethren, so they call him, father; and, since the laws of God bind us to give honour to our carnal parents, surely our ghostly parent must needs have greater right thereto; who, in Christ Jesus, by the gospel,† begets us, regenerates us, is our legate to God, fills us with the Holy Ghost, feeds us with the word as with milk, nourishes, confirms, absolves, and fits us for sacred

mysteries, judges our cause, and administers unto us the sacred bread of eternal life.

In fine, when you see the priest bow down at the *Confiteor*, with his eyes fixed on the earth, and his hands joined or beating his breast, you see the poor publican standing afar off, and not daring so much as to lift up his eyes towards heaven, but knocking his breast, and saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' And, 'as this man went down into his house justified,' so 'every one that humbles himself' in like manner, 'shall be exalted' accordingly.' *Luke 18, 13, 14.* The

Priest having said the *Confiteor* for himself, the

Clerk replies, *Misereatur tui, &c.* 'May the Almighty God have mercy on thee, and forgiving thee thy sins, bring thee to eternal life.' And the

Priest answers, *Amen.* Then the Clerk, in the name of the people, having likewise repeated the *Confiteor*, the

Priest prays for them, saying, *Misereatur vestri, &c.* 'Almighty God, be merciful to you, and forgiving you your sins, bring you to life everlasting.' And the

Clerk answers, *Amen.* Then the Priest, signing himself with the sign of the Cross, gives absolution, saying, *Indulgentiam, absolutionem, &c.* 'Almighty and merciful God, grant us pardon, absolution, and remission of our sins.' And this *absolution*, given by the virtue and power of Christ's cross and passion, is called *sacerdotal*, (not sacramental,) conformable to the general confession; yet notwithstanding, it may obtain remission of sin, through the penitence of the people, and the priests powerful prayer: for a 'contrite and humble heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' *Ps. 50, 19.* Consequently this absolution affects all the faithful present: for whom the

Clerk answers, *Amen.*

The priest and people, having made this humble confession, and received absolution, do mutually comfort one another. The

\* *Mat. 5, 24, 25.*

† *1 Cor. 4, 15.*