

2d. That the commission is not to be taken in this meaning will appear, if we consider that there is *no token given*, by which a minister can *determine when a person* is a proper subject of forgiveness.

To say, that when a person repents, he is to be forgiven, is not answering the *difficulty* in this objection; for it is impossible to determine when a person has repented. The Apostles were unable to determine this, as appears from the writings of St. Paul already quoted. He *doubted* the Galatian converts. It is necessary, therefore, in order that a power of absolution may be exercised, that there be some sensible token by which it may be known who is a proper subject of the rite. And we find, that in the Papal Church, where this doctrine is the most grossly abused, they do require a sensible token. Thus they decree *penance* before forgiveness. And where the officers in the Church are avaricious, and look upon money as the greatest good, they bestow absolution upon receiving this. If a person cannot be forgiven without repentance, and if it cannot be known when a person does repent, then, in order that a minister may pronounce absolution, it is necessary for him to know, *by some sensible token*, when repentance is exercised. As there is *no such token* appointed by God, the commission of our Lord did *not* convey a right absolutely to forgive.

3d. That it implied no such power will appear, if we consider that the exercise of it would be inconsistent with other duties which are enjoined upon us. We are commanded, in Scripture, to love our neighbor as ourself. *Not knowing the heart*, we are commanded to make presumptions in its favor, and to forgive our enemies. We are commanded to exercise that charity which hopeth all things, which believeth all things, and which covereth a multitude of sins. We know that no person can be forgiven of God who does not truly repent. If a minister be under obligations to forgive many who do not repent, his absolution cannot surely be confirmed. Should it be said that a minister is under obligation to exercise *charity, and forgive as a Christian*, but he is *not*, as a *minister*, it may be answered, that there is no reason for such a distinction; and to suppose that a person *must forgive*