

our Lord, was not to the total destruction of sin and to the mechanical and entire expulsion of all evil from this world, nothing remains but to say that he came to remedy sin—to deal with sin wherever he found it—to deal with it in each successive generation. And this is true, for Christ, our Lord, knowing and foreknowing that sin should be provided a lasting remedy for the lasting evil, and, therefore, calling to him his Apostles, he said to them: "I am come; that where sin abounded, grace might abound still more." Therefore did Christ suffer that the body of sin might be broken and destroyed in each successive generation. "The Father sent me," he said; "that where sin abounded, grace might abound still more; and this I say unto you: that even as the Father sent me, even so I send you." Then breathing upon those Apostles, he said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." That moment, at the breathing of the Son of God, the power that was in him was communicated to the Apostles that, in his power, in his strength and in his grace and action, they might absolve every sinner and cleanse their souls. Behold, then, how clearly and emphatically he embodied his action in the Church, and gave unto the Church to do unto the end of time what he came to do upon the earth, namely: to deal with sin and with sinners, and to say to every weeping one and contrite, no matter how great the burden of his sin: "Arise; depart in peace; thy sin is forgiven." Even those who deny to the Catholic Church the power of forgiving sin, admit that the Apostles had it. They cannot deny that the Apostles had it, without denying the very words of Christ—"Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven." They admit the Apostles had it; but, strange to say, they imagine the mysterious power died with the Apostles. Now, let us take up this theory; let us reflect for a moment upon this foolish imagination—that the power to forgive sin died with the Apostles. The action of Christ, I repeat again—the mission of Christ—was to deal with sin and with sinners. He gave the power undoubtedly to the Apostles, and I assert, that if that power died with John, the last of the twelve, the action and the mission of Jesus Christ ceased upon the earth. It is absolutely necessary to acknowledge either that the power was transmitted from the Apostles to their successors in the priesthood as they themselves received it from Christ, or, to confess that the action of the Son of God, as Redeemer, not being utterly destructive, but only remedial, that action must have ceased entirely when the last of the Apostles died, and that there was an end of all hope of pardon of sin. Can you imagine this?—did he come only to redeem the generation that crucified him? Did he come only to redeem and provide a remedy for a few generations that lasted as long as one of the Apostles was upon the earth? Oh, no! but he declared, as in the beginning so unto the end he should be with his Church in the fulness of his power, in the greatness of the outpouring of his graces. "I am with you," he says—all days, even unto the consummation of the world. And, therefore, says St. Paul, he is Jesus Christ, the Anointed Saviour of man, saving to-day as eighteen hundred years ago, through his Church—yesterday and to-day the same. The fact that it is recorded in the Scriptures that the Apostles had the power of transmitting all that they received from Christ to their successors, is evident from one simple fact, that is not sufficiently meditated upon by those who deny it. Christ our Lord spoke to the original twelve. Judas was amongst them. Judas prevaricated, betrayed his Master, fell from his high place of honor, even as Lucifer fell from his throne in heaven. What did they do? They chose a man from out of the seventy-two disciples, whose names was Matthias, good and holy; they took this man and laid their hands upon him, and they received him into the number of the twelve, and he became even as they were. Everything that they could do, he received the power to do. From whom—from Christ? No. Christ was already ascended—from whom? From the Apostles themselves. Think you, my brethren, that if they had not the power of transmitting all that they had received from Christ, that they would have chosen a man and made him an apostle? And yet we have this upon the authority of Scripture. What, therefore, they were able to do, their successors in the priesthood are able to do; and so the golden tradition is handed down, that the stream that began with Jesus Christ, that flowed from him into Peter, James, John and the others, flows to-day in the sacred channels of the priesthood; and that stream is a twofold stream—namely, pure, undiluted doctrine as true as the very word of God, because it is the word of God, never to be polluted by the least error, and side by side with that stream of doctrine the waters of Divine grace, the sacramental power to heal by the touch, to sanctify by the grace of Jesus Christ in the sacrament. These remain, as far as regards sin in the sacrament of baptism and in the sacrament of penance. It is clear, then, dearly beloved, that this was necessary, in order that the mission and the action of the Son of God, as the Redeemer of the world, falling upon sinners, touching them and cleansing them, should continue in the church; and this was prophesied clearly before his coming—"In that day there shall be opened unto the house of David and unto the dwellers in Jerusalem a fountain of water for the cleansing of the sinner and the unclean." That sacramental fountain springs forth from the church in the sacrament of penance.

Now, before we pass to consider the action of this sacrament upon society, consider it viewed in the action of Almighty God, and in the wonderful manifestation in the heart and hand of Jesus Christ, when the Son of God came down from Heaven to redeem the world. He came with three glorious attributes, which he was bound to observe even in the action of

his redemption, because he was God. These were Mercy, Power and Justice. The Justice the Eternal Father demanded that his own Divine Son, who alone could pay man's debt, should come down from Heaven and pay that debt in his blood. The Justice in the Son of God in his relation to his Heavenly Father made him come down from Heaven, and pay in the shedding of that blood, the all-sufficient price, for all the souls of mankind. The Justice of the Eternal Father demanded, that as he had been outraged in every attribute of his dignity and power by the man Adam so by a man, a true man, that honor, and glory and dignity, should be restored to him, and the Justice of the Eternal Word brought that uncreated Lord from Heaven; that becoming a true man, the Son of Man, he might be able to pay in that sacred humanity and by the shedding of that blood for the souls of mankind, and wash away that sin. Thus we see how the Justice of God is manifested.

Secondly, the Mercy of God is seen, dear brethren, when we had fallen in the sin of Adam, when we had abandoned the Almighty God ungrateful for all that he conferred upon us, he might have left us, a fallen and God-saken race. He might have turned away from the first sinner upon earth as he turned away from the first sinner in heaven, never to look with mercy upon his face again. But no! God looked upon a fallen race with eyes of pity, with eyes of infinite compassion and of mercy; and in the first day of his anger, he remembered this pity and this mercy, for after having cursed Adam for his sin, and having laid his curses upon the earth in the work of Adam, then did he unfold the plan of his redemption, and to the serpent he said, "A woman and a woman's seed shall crush thy head."

We behold the power of God for says St. Augustine, "the power of God is measured in our regard by the greatness of his works." Now, the greatest work of God was the redemption of mankind, and the greatest work that ever entered into the mind of God to conceive or into the hand of God to execute; so God made man in our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the greatest of all God's works. Compared with the creature, the Son of Mary, for in his humanity he was a creature, a man—compared with him, everything else that God made, every other power that he ever exhibited, vanishes as if it were nothing, and the creation of our Lord, a man, looms forth, filling Heaven and earth as the greatest of all God's works. So in like manner, in the dealing of Christ our Lord with sinners he was careful to observe the same three attributes of his divinity. His power he showed forth in the remission of their sins. His mercy was manifested in his healing the sick and raising the dead to life. His Justice he showed forth, for never did he absolve a sinner from his sin, without cautioning that sinner lest he might return to that sin again, and something far more terrible might fall upon him.

Now, when we pass from the action of Christ to his church, what do we find? We find, my dearly-beloved brethren, that in all the works of God in his church—in all his Sacraments—a union of the same attributes; but nowhere, in no Sacrament, in no action of God do we find power and mercy so magnificently shown forth, so wonderfully blended into one act as in the act by which the sinner is saved and absolved from his sin. First of all, consider the power of God. The Almighty God showed his omnipotence first of all in the creation. He spoke over the darkness and the void of space, and he said: "Let there be light," and light was made. In an instant the sun shone forth in the heavens; the moon caught up her reflected glory from him. The stars sprang forth like clustering gems in the firmament newly created, and the whole world was flooded with the blessed light which sprang into existence. Then followed the same imperative, omnipotent command, the same fiat, and at the sound—the expression of God's will—life came out of death, as light out of darkness, beauty out of chaos, order out of disorder, and all the spheres of heaven took up their position in their respective places in the creation, and began that hymn of harmony and of praise which has resounded for 6,000 years. How great and how wonderful was the word which God spoke, and by which he could effect such great things, and St. Augustine tells us that the words by which the priest says to the sinner, "I absolve thee, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost," and which at its sound cleanses that sinner's soul from all his sins; brings him forth from out of the grave; brings him forth from the darkness of his sin into the light of God's graces, from defilement into purity, from death into life; that word is infinitely more powerful than the fiat by which the Almighty God created the world. Infinitely more powerful; but why? Because when God in the beginning of creation stood upon the threshold of heaven, and forth from heaven's brightness sent the world, there was nothing in the void that lay before him, nothing in the chaotic space over which his word was spread that could resist the action of his power. There was nothing there. He made all things out of nothing; but the original nothingness, therefore, could not resist the action of God. Nor is there in heaven, or upon the earth, or in hell, anything that can resist the action of God, except one thing—and that one thing is the obstinate will of the perverse heart of man. The will of man alone can say to the Almighty God, "Omnipotence, I defy thee," and why? It is not that God could not, if he willed it, annihilate that will, but he does not will it. It is because the Almighty God, by an eternal law, respects the freedom of man's will, so that if that will resists him, Omnipotence itself is powerless before that resistance, such being the decree, the law, and the will of God. The heart of man alone, the will of man alone, can offer such an obstacle to the Almighty God's action, even in his omnipotent power, that God must yield, because he cannot gain a victory without destroying that freedom which he has sworn by an eternal law to respect.—

Now, when a man commits a sin, falls from one sin into another, when he becomes a drunkard or an impure man, or a blasphemer, or in any other way hands over his soul to the devil, then his will is opposed to God, his heart is turned against God; and how can the Almighty God convert that man whose will is opposed to him and the freedom of whose will he is bound to respect. Here comes the wonderful action of God's wisdom, united to His omnipotence. He will not say to that sinner, "You must be converted." He will not say it, because if He said it that conversion would not be free, would not be worthy of man, nor would it be deserving the favor and acceptance of Almighty God. He that is saved must be saved by the free co-operation of God's graces, and he that is damned goes down to hell of his own free will. Here is the only thing that the mind of God alone, united to his omnipotence, cannot solve. Here is a man whose will is opposed to God, the Almighty God never can have mercy upon that man, and yet God cannot in virtue of his own eternal law, he cannot force that will to relinquish its opposition to him. Therefore by his graces, by his wonderful attractive powers, he awakens in the sinner's soul the first feeling of love, puts before the sinner's eyes the first hideous and true linaments of sin; he puts in the sinner's heart the first feeling of remorse and loneliness in being separated from God. He puts into the sinner's cup of pleasure, the little drop that embitters it to his spiritual taste, and He reminds him how sweet it was to love his Lord, his God. He thunders in that sinner's ear the announcement of His judgments.—He strikes that sinner's soul with the first trembling of that holy fear, which is the beginning of his redemption. With a merciful hand He opens the abyss of hell, and shows to that sinner's startled gaze the last home, and the everlasting dwelling place of the enemies of God. And thus by those powerful graces, sweetly yet strongly does He bring that sinner's soul around until a length the impediment is removed and the man comes freely, not forced, but drawn, attracted, not coerced at all, yet coming in spite of himself, by the mystery of the omnipotence of divine grace, and of the wonderful respect of God's omnipotence for the freedom of man; and he comes and surrenders himself to God. Then, and only then can the Almighty God absolve him from his sin. Consider how great the obstacle that is to be removed from the sinner's soul before the omnipotent God can free him from his sin. Wherever there is a will opposed to God, if all the angels in heaven, if all the powers in heaven and upon earth strained themselves to change that will, their action would be simply impotent before it; so tremendous is that law that preserves the perfect freedom of man's will in him, for good or for evil.

We can again reflect upon the power of God as shown in his punishment of sin, for this is the second great feature of His omnipotence when he comes out in all the rigor of his Justice. Oh, how terrible is it to think that while we are here peacefully assembled around this holy altar, that there is somewhere in the creation of God, the vast, the terrible prison of hell, with its millions and millions of unhappy inmates, that its flames, roaring, swaying, and now burning somewhere or other in the creation of God, that somewhere or other the air is filled with the cry, the spiritual cry of the imprisoned souls and reprobate angels of God, dashing in all their wild and impotent rage against those bars that shall never permit them to go forth; that there is enkindled by the breath of an angry God, a fire that shall never be extinguished, and where for all eternity the hand of God in all its omnipotence will fall with all the weight of his unmitigated vengeance. Terrible! terrible! it is to think of the despair that looking forward into the endless eternity sees no ray of hope, no momentary mitigation of the terrible punishment of soul and of body there. Yet, if you reflect upon it, what is more natural than that the sinner dying in his sin, shall go down to hell? Where can he go? He cannot go to heaven with all his sin upon him. He died the enemy of God in his heart, because of the presence of sin. Is this the man that you would introduce into the divine presence?—Is it upon those lips attuned to blasphemy that you would place the everlasting canticles of praise? He has no idea of the Justice of heaven; he has no idea of the language of heaven, for all his lifetime he spoke the language of hell, cursing and blaspheming. He has no idea of the God of heaven, for all his lifetime he served the demon of his own passions and his own evil inclinations. There is nothing in him attuned for heaven. It would be violence offered to him to send him to heaven and to make him enter into the joys of God. No, it is natural that he should go down into the cesspool of hell. Either his sin must leave him or else that sin abiding in him must lead him under the hand of God's vengeance. What is more natural than that the water flowing from the little fountain on the mountain summit, flowing down through its little bed, falling over one rock and then over another, receiving its various tributaries as it flows along, and growing in size until it becomes a little rivulet, and then flowing from one cascade into another it finds the deep valley of the open country, and there swelling into a mighty river, spanned by great bridges, passing through the great towns, carrying upon its bosom mighty ships of war, until at length, turbulent with a thousand imprimitives, it falls upon the deep, wide ocean. This is all natural; that a man should stand upon that river side and say, "Bless God, thou shining river," is natural; but that a man should be able to stand in the middle of that mighty stream, and with his hands to push it back against its current, to make it flow up through the upper lands, up to the higher levels, to make it flow upwards against the catenact, to bring it up, purifying it as he goes, until at length, from the turbulent impure, mighty stream, he brings it back again over the rocks, until, purest crystal, he arrives at its source. This would be the power, and this is precisely what the omnipotence of God does here in the confessional, as compared with his action in permitting the damned to go downward to hell. That God should permit a sinner to go down to hell, that he should visit him there with an everlasting punishment, is natural and necessary; it shows the power of God. But that the Almighty God should stop the sinner in his mad career of sin; that he should make him stand still who was hurrying on through the channel of impurity and pride, avarice and dishonesty, gathering in every element of corruption and defilement as he went along, swelling forth in his tide of iniquity as he was nearing the great ocean of hell; that God should stop him and send him back again into the halls of his memory, and through the upper stream of his life, cleansing him from this impurity and that as he went along, until at length he brought him back to the pure, limpid, fountain head of his existence—this is the wonder; here shines the omnipotence of God; and this is precisely the act which he does when he takes the sinner and cleanses him from his sin. But how wonderfully is God's love and mercy blended in his action. We suppose that the very subject of this omnipotence is a sinner, a man who has violated perhaps the most essential and important of God's laws, a man who may have the blood of the innocent upon his red-stained hands, a man out of whose soul every vestige of divine resemblance and of spiritual aspiration may have departed because of his impurity, a man who may have committed sins worse even than those which brought down the deluge of fire from heaven upon the five cities of Pentapolis—a man who may have lived only to devote himself to every most wicked and diabolical purpose until he has frittered to pieces every single one of God's holy laws and commandments; that man comes and stands before this God whose goodness he has despised, whose graces he has trampled upon, whose every attribute he has outraged and asks that God

to deal with him. He comes as a criminal, and to that God says, "Lord, Lord Jesus Christ, I am here. There is not in the world this day one so bad as I; there is no record in the annals of thy dealings with sinners, of any sinner so terrible as I have been; and now I wish to enter with thee into judgment." If that man had violated the laws of this world as he has violated the laws of heaven; if that man had insulted human society as he has insulted the law of Jesus Christ; if that man's iniquity were only taken cognizance of by an earthly tribunal, see how they would deal with him. He would be dragged from his house perhaps in the noonday, by the rough officer of justice; he would be taken publicly through the streets of the city; every eye looking at him curiously, every hand pointing to him as the great criminal, the man who committed such a murder; the man who did such and such wicked things. He would be flung into a dark dungeon in a prison, and after days and days of waiting and anxiety, he would be brought again into open court, and the whole world called in to hear the testimony of his crime, and to behold his shame. No feeling of his would be spared; he would not be allowed to shrink into a corner of that court, and hide his guilty head. No, but he must stand forth and confront the witnesses who depose against him, and quietly and calmly swear away his life's blood. He must be exposed to the foolish inquiring gaze of the world, unsympathizing; he must be, perhaps, in his transit from the court to the prison, exposed to the jeers and the hisses of the multitude, and when he is found guilty, then comes the awful moment, and the Judge in solemn dignity tells him that his life is forfeited, and that he must die a death of public infamy and ignominy to expiate his crime. Thus does the world deal with criminals, but here is this criminal of whom I spoke and he appears to the son of man, and he says, "Saviour, God, let us enter into judgment." Christ takes him by the hand, warns off the crowd, brings him into the secret tribunal, calls no witnesses against him, allows no finger of shame to be pointed at him, listens to what he has to say against himself and says, "Speak, my son, and speak freely."—He tells his deeds of shame, it is true, in the ears of a man. That man is there as the representative of Jesus Christ. That man who has left his human curiosity, who has left his human frailty, who has left his human memory behind him, goes in there to sit in the seat of judgment, as the representative of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose mercy he is about to administer. He hears the whispered word which must not be heard even by the angel of mercy who is there, but only by the sinner, the priest, and Jesus Christ. That word falls upon the priest's ear for a moment, enters into his mind, is judged, and passes away; just as a little child on a calm summer evening takes a pebble and flings it into the bosom of a deep, still, placid lake. For an instant there is a ripple upon the face of the water, there are little circles of waves, presently these die away, the water closes, and the pebble is lost sight of forever, and no human eye shall see it any more. So for an instant the sound of the sinner's voice makes as it were a ripple upon the ear of the priest, passes from that into the unfathomable ocean of the merciful breast of Jesus Christ. The water of forgiveness and mercy flows over it. That sin is gone, gone forever. Nor eye of angel, nor eye of God shall ever look upon it again. How little it costs the priest to say, "I absolve thee in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,"—three words—how little it costs the sinner; it is scarcely a humiliation. If indeed a man were to proclaim his confession, and make it public; if a man were to make it before the assembly of the faithful; if a man had to make it on Sunday morning before all the people when they were crowding into mass, even then, with such a condition, wouldn't it be a high gift, even with all the ignominy and contumely that he would sustain by such a public confession, all would be cheap considering what he got in return. Then if the Almighty God said to the sinner, "I will bring thee to the stake, and only at the last moment, when the last drop of your heart's blood is coming forth from your broken heart, then and only then will I absolve thee," wouldn't it not be cheap by purchasing this pardon of God, this grace of God, this eternity of God's glory in heaven, even by the rendering of the last drop of our blood? But, no. Behold the love, behold the commiseration of Christ, our Lord. He comes teeming with mercy, sparing the feelings of the sinner, trying to anticipate by the sweetness of his mercy all humiliation and all pain, shrouding all under that wonderful veil of secrecy which has never for an instant been rent since the Church was first founded; and in the end it is the only tribunal where, when a man is found guilty, the only sentence that is pronounced upon him is, "You are acquitted." In our own tribunals, when a man is found guilty, he receives his punishment. In the tribunal of penance, all a man has to say is, "All these I am guilty of before my God, and with sorrow I confess it," and the only sentence is, "You are acquitted; go, go in peace; no vestige of sin, no stain of your iniquity is upon you; the sin is gone, the terrible curse that was upon your soul is changed into a blessing."—The angel guardian that accompanied the sinner to the door of the confessional waits without, even as the angels waited around the tomb while the body of the Lord laid there, but even as these angels, when the midnight hour of the resurrection came, beheld a glorious figure arise from that tomb, and flung out their hearts and voices in admiration of the risen Saviour, from whom every wound and every deformity had disappeared, so the angel guardian waits, prayerfully, sorrowfully outside the confessional, turns to him when the door opens, and beholds the man who went in covered with sin come forth as pure as that angel. "The man who went in loaded with the curse of God comes forth with the blessing of the eternal God shining in characters of immortal light upon his forehead. The man who went in dead and buried in his sin, has found within the secret tribunal the voice that said, "Lazarus, come forth," and he is arisen, and he comes forth, and the angel guardian is astonished at the change and the brightness. Is it not so?—was there not a sad angel following, with reluctant and distant steps, the woman that flouted through the streets of Jerusalem with her flowing robes and outstretched neck of pride?—was there not an angel that knew her in the days of her innocence, and now stricken with misery to behold so much shame? Oh, when that angel saw her as she rose from the feet of Jesus Christ, which she had washed with tears—oh, when that angel saw her as she arose with the words of the Lord upon her, "Go in peace; thou hast loved much; all is forgiven thee"—then was struck the key-note of that joy that re-echoed in heaven until the vaults of heaven were shaken, whilst the nine choirs gave glory to God over the one sinner that repented.

And now, dearly beloved, we have seen the mercy, the love, the power that is exercised. Now let us consider the action of the sacrament upon society. The Catholic church received from Christ our Lord a twofold mission. "That mission the world is unwilling to recognize, but that mission it is the destiny of the church of God to fulfil unto the end of time. That mission lies in a twofold character to sinners. To those who are in darkness it brings the light; to those who are dead in the corruption of sin it brings life and the purifying influences of Divine grace. This twofold mission is perfectly clear from the word of Christ to his Apostles, "You are the light of the earth," he says; "you are the life of the world." Turning to them on another occasion, he said, "You are the salt of the earth." The light to illumine the world's darkness, the salt to heal and purify the world's corruption. The first of these missions the church of God fulfils in her teaching. The Psalmist said, and with truth, "the declaration

of thy word, Oh, God! brings light and intelligence to the world," and as it is the church's destiny to be unto the end of time the light of the world, and as that light which is to come from her must be the very light of God; therefore, the word of truth which created that light can never die away from the church's lips, nor coming from these lips can it ever be polluted by the slightest iota of admixture with error. The second mission of the church is to sinners. She has the power given to her by our Lord, not only to illumine them in their darkness, but to heal them in their corruption. What is the corruption, that infirmity, that defilement to which Christ alluded when he said to the Apostles, "You are the salt of the earth; you must be put upon the sore places of the world?" What are these sore places, these festering wounds? They are the wounds of sin. Sin is the sore spot on the soul. Sin is the awful ulcer of society—sin that abounds everywhere, that abounds in every circle, in trade and commerce, making men untrustworthy and dishonest, making servants pilfer and steal, making masters and mistresses exacting and unjust, making children disobedient, making parents forgetful of their duty to their children, making the young man impure, and the married man unfaithful—all these things that are teeming around us, that meet us wherever we turn, that we cannot avoid seeing and hearing, be we ever so fastidious, that come into the very touch of our hand and disgust us, until at length we are ready to cry out with the Psalmist, "Oh God! woe is me, because my pilgrimage here is prolonged."—all these things are the corruption of this world, and the power that the church received when she was called the salt of the earth was to purge away all this, heal all these wounds and sweeten all this bitterness and corruption of society. All this she does through the sacrament of penance or through the confessional; so she is truly the saviour of society, and the world cannot do without her. How significant it is that when Germany gave up the Catholic faith three hundred years ago, such was the immorality, such was the impurity that flooded the community at once that actually a German city was obliged to petition to have the confessional or the sacrament of penance, restored. All relations of society said: "The responsibility is gone; the yoke is removed from us; we no longer take ourselves to task concerning our sins, weeping over them, taking measures to avoid them; the pain and humiliation of confessing them; all this is gone." And then, like the Hebrews of old, they joined hands, and danced around the new-found idol—the golden calf of their own sensuality and wickedness. "You are the salt of the earth," he said, and said truly. Oh if the Catholic Church were not on this earth, if she were not here with her sacraments to create purity and to preserve it, to create honesty and to enforce it, to bring home the entire responsibility of every man to himself, to bring home to every soul the deformity of sin, the necessity of repenting individually for each and every sin, to shake every soul in the sacrament of penance from the lethargy of sin, I profess to you my dear brethren, I believe that if the Catholic church were not here, operating upon her millions throughout the world to do this, that long before this time the chariot of society, rolling down the steep hill of infirmity, would have precipitated the whole world into destruction. How is it that Protestant employers and masters are so anxious to have Catholic servants, Catholic apprentices, Catholic people about them—how is it—because they are shrewd enough to know that the confessional that they despise creates honesty, and enforces it. There is no stronger way to enforce honesty than to get a man to believe that he can not live without Jesus Christ, and that Jesus Christ is on the altar waiting for him, and to tell him that between him and Jesus Christ stands a barrier that he never can overcome if he become dishonest, without restoring to the last farthing whatever he has unjustly taken, to tell him if he becomes a thief public or private, that the accumulation of his thievery would build up an impenetrable wall between him and God, and until that wall is pulled to pieces by restitution, he never can approach the Sacrament.

An English Protestant clergyman came to me once when I was on an English mission and he said: "Father, I come to complain of one of my men servants." I said to him, "What on earth have I to do with your men servants?" "Oh," said he, "all my servants are Catholics. I don't employ anybody else." "What complaint do you make of them?" "Well," says he, "I insist upon their going to confession, and this man has not been for the last two months. Now, unless you can induce him to go I am going to get rid of him," said I, "You don't believe in confession?" "No," said he, "I don't believe in it, but I believe and know that as long as my Catholic people will go to confession and Church, they will not steal from me." What is the agency that touches the immense impurity in the world and creates purity? I answer it is the confessional, and remember that the idea of purity or virtue as it lies in the mind of Christ and in the mind of his church, is not merely an exterior decorum, not merely the avoiding of gross sins, but that it begins in the very thoughts and in the inner chambers, in the souls of men, that it will not allow an impure thought or imagination to rest there for a single instant; that it will not allow even as much as an impure thought to be sanctioned for one second by the will, and out of that interior purity of soul, of thought, of imagination springs the exterior virtue of chastity and without that interior purity rendering the soul itself as white, and as innocent as the soul of Mary on the day of her assumption, without that all exterior chastity would be as a dead body without its spirit. Now, the only way to create that interior purity, to create the essence of the virtue, to make the soul of the virtue, the life of the virtue there, the only way is to establish firmly in the soul and in the mind of man the thought of his responsibility to God, for every thought of his mind as well as for every word or action, to bring him face to face with Christ, to make him not only know but feel that he whom he serves, looks with a penetrating eye and scrutinizing gaze into the very inner chambers of the soul. How does the church do this? By bringing that man to confession, by putting him face to face with Jesus Christ, scrutinizing and examining his thoughts as well as his actions; by making him search by the light of his memory every cranny of his soul and of his imagination; by making him feel, that even though his lips may have never breathed an obscene word, even though this man may have never committed an impure action, he may still be as impure and as bad as the worst of men. This is only done in that action of the church which not only teaches a man to be pure, but drags him, as it were, with holy violence into the presence of God, and says, "Come, open your breast, my son, and let the eyes of Jesus Christ into your soul." Thus it is that from the confessional springs those virtues by which man acts upon his fellow-man. The first virtue is purity, the next virtue in relation to his fellow-men is honesty, and the third is charity. Behold how the confessional acts here. If a man speaks badly of his neighbor, if he ruins that neighbor's character and reputation, if he gets that neighbor thrown out of some employment by his whispering, and he goes to confession, and is sorry for the sin he committed, he finds, perhaps to his astonishment, that the priest has no absolution for him until he makes good that man's character; there is no absolution for him until he swallows the lie that he told; there is no pardon for him until he restores to his neighbor the fair fame and name which, by his whispering and envy and his injustice he robbed him; there is no pardon for him. What greater or stronger motive is there to make a