

The Power of Binding and Loosing

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INTRODUCTION

Written in the years before his execution at Constance in 1415, these pages find the Bohemian reformer parsing the keys of Peter — the authority to bind and loose — against what he saw as their catastrophic misuse by the medieval papacy. Hus draws on Augustine and scholastic distinctions to separate the priestly power of orders from a spiritual power common to all the baptized, a move that would echo through Luther and the wider Reformation a century later. The prose is dense, scholastic in method, and unafraid of technical divisions. Expect a closely reasoned argument, not a sermon — the work of a scholar building the case that would cost him his life.

Now as to the power — authority — of Christ, given by himself to his vicars, which is touched upon in the words, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," that is, the power to bind and to loose sins, — Augustine says, *Com. on John 21*: "The effects of this power are shown, when Christ adds, 'And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' This power is a spiritual power. Therefore, it is to be noted, that spiritual power is a power of the spirit, determining its acts of itself so that a rational creature, so far as gracious gifts go, may be guided and have his own distinctive place both as determined from the standpoint of the subject and the object." Every man, however, is a spirit, since he has two natures; as the Saviour in speaking to his disciples said: "Ye know not what spirit ye are of" [Luke 9 : 55], and "every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God," I John 4:3. Here the spirit is subtle and heretical, denying Jesus to be very God and very man. And it is evident that whether power in respect to God and power in respect to rational creatures are analogous or the analogy is to be restricted to the powers of men and the powers of angels, it is true that all spiritual power is a power of the spirit. And, although a man does not give grace, he nevertheless administers the sacraments, so that the inferior is guided as to gifts of grace.

But although bodily power may be the result of gifts of grace, nevertheless it is immediate, so that the creature of God is ruled according to the law of natural things or of fortune. So every man is seen to have a double power; for every man ought to have the power over the movements of his members, and therefore has the power of walking in grace, so also the spiritual power has manifold subdivisions, for there is one power of orders and another common to all. The power of orders is called the spiritual

power. This is that which the clergy has to administer the sacraments of the church that the clergy may profit itself and the laity, and such power is the power of consecrating the mass, absolving and performing the other sacramental acts — sacramentalia. For the power of consecrating the mass exists of itself and immediately, that the priest may consecrate just as dispositions of moral virtue are ordained because of acts better than the dispositions. And as the priest, in order that he may consecrate worthily, is guided as to the gifts of grace, the above description holds.

But the spiritual power, which is common, is the power which every priest has in doing spiritual works whether in his own person or among others, and about these the verse reminds us:

Doce, consule, castiga, solare, remitte, jer, ora. \ Teach, counsel, punish, console, remit, bear, pray.

For as many as received Christ by faith to these hath he given the power to become the sons of God, so that they may guide themselves and their brethren in the way of their Father Christ, and by rebuking in love as Christ said: "If thy brother sin against thee, go show him his fault between thee and him alone," Matt. 18 : 15.

Secular power is twofold, civil and common. Civil power, which is authoritative, belongs only to the civil lord. But civil power, which is vicarious, belongs to officials or servants. But secular power, which is common to all, is the power by which a man is able to rule himself and his own according to the gifts of nature and of fortune. And thus, just as a man cannot be a whole man without body and soul, nor is the adopted child of God complete without the gifts of nature and of grace, so the pilgrim cannot get along as a pilgrim unless he has both secular and spiritual power which are common to all, although this is bound in the case of infants and the dead. But spiritual power is everywhere the more perfect and the sacerdotal power exceeds the power of kings in dignity as appears from Heb. 7:7: "Greater is he that blesses and less is he who is blest."

Hence the spiritual power, which is sacerdotal, excels the royal in age, dignity, and usefulness. In age it excels, because the priesthood was instituted by God's command, as appears from Ex. 28. Later at God's command the kingly power was instituted by the priesthood, as appears from Deut. 17 and I Sam. 12. In dignity it excels, as already said, because the priest as the greater blesses, consecrates and anoints the king. And the usefulness is evidently greater for the reason that the spiritual power is in and of itself sufficient for the ruling of the people, as appears from the history of Israel, which down to the time of Saul was salubriously administered independent of the kingly authority. Therefore, the spiritual power, inasmuch as it concerns the best things — things having their sufficiency in themselves — excels the earthly power, since the latter is of no avail independent of the spiritual power which is the chief regulative force. On the other hand, the spiritual power may act by itself without the aid of the earthly power. And, for this reason, the priests who abuse this power, which is so exalted, by pride or other open sin, fall all the lower with the devil into hell, and this is in accord with the rule of St. Gregory and other saints: "The higher the position the deeper the fall."

And it is to be noted, that power now means absolutely the ability to regulate and rule and now collectively such ability through authoritative notification and announcement. And when these senses are

equally known, it is evident, there is nothing contradictory in the principles that there is no power but of God and yet to give power from God, that is, make an authoritative announcement before the church that a created being has from God power of this sort. Indeed such a bestowal, so far as part of it is concerned, is given by man but not unless God primarily authorizes it. And from this we may further understand that power is not relaxed or stifled, increased or diminished, so far as its essence goes, but only in respect to the exercise of the act which proceeds from the power itself. And this exercise ought only to be used when a reasonable ground exists for it from the side of God. This meaning is set forth in Decretum 24 : 1, Miramur [Friedberg, 1 : 981], which says: "The official power is one thing, the exercise of it another. And official power is for the most part held in restraint in the case of monks and of others, such as those under suspension, who are inhibited from ministering, though the power itself is not taken away from them."¹ In like manner it is conceded that the natural power, which is free will, may now be relaxed by grace and now tightened [i. e., increased and lessened]. And in this way the seeming discordances of the doctors which arise by ambiguity of language are solved, some of whom, as Anselm, say, "that free will cannot be lost or increased or diminished," while others, like Augustine, Enchiridion [Nic. Fathers, 3 : 247], say, that free will may be lost through sin and increased through grace. On this account there is in the church great strife about the power of bestowment, withdrawal or restriction. Nevertheless, it is known that when God and reason make it necessary for the profit of the church that a thing should be done by man, then and not otherwise does God give or withdraw or restrict power of this sort.

Hence, when Christ said to Peter: "I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," that is the power of binding and loosing sins, he said in the person of Peter to the whole church militant, that not does any person whatever of the church without distinction hold those keys, but that the whole church, as made up of its individual parts, as far as they are suitable for this, holds the keys. These keys, however, are not material things, but they are spiritual power and acquaintance with evangelical knowledge, and it was on account of this power and knowledge, as we believe, that Christ used the plural "keys." For this reason the Master of Sentences, 12 : 18, cap. 2 [Migne's ed., p. 375], says: "He speaks in the plural ' keys,' for one is not sufficient. These keys are the wisdom of discernment and the power of judging, whereby the ecclesiastical judges are bound to receive the worthy and exclude the unworthy from the kingdom." And it is to be noted, that to the Trinity alone does it belong to have the chief power of this kind. And the humanity of Christ alone has chief subordinate power from within himself, for Christ is at the same time God and man. Nevertheless, prelates of the church have committed unto them instrumental or ministerial power, which is a judicial power, consisting chiefly of two things, namely, the power of knowing how to discriminate, and the power of judging judicially. The former of these is called in the court of penance the key of the conscience, reasonably disposing the mind to the exercise of the second function, that is, the judicial; for no one legally has the power of pronouncing a definite sentence unless he has the prior power of discerning in a case in which he is called upon to discriminate and pronounce sentence.

The first key, therefore, is neither an act nor a state of knowledge, but the power of antecedent discernment. Consequently, all the power of the sacerdotal order, namely, of being the instrument in opening to man the gate, which is Christ, or of shutting to an inferior the said kingdom, is the key of the church

given to Peter and to others, as appears from the Saviour's words: "Verily I say unto you whatsoever ye bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," Matt. 18 : 18. He also said: " Receive ye the Holy Spirit. Whosoever sins ye forgive they are forgiven unto them ; and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained," John 20 : 22. To Peter and the church in him were the words spoken: " Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth," etc, Matt. 16 : 19.

These words, because of a defect in their understanding, frighten many Christians so that they are filled with servile fear, while others are deceived by them and presume because of the fulness of power [they are supposed to convey]. Therefore, the following things are to be laid down: (1) That the Saviour's dictum about the virtue of the words is necessary, because it is not possible for a priest to loose or bind anything, unless such loosing and binding take place in heaven, not only in the heavenly realm which also comprises the sublunary world and all things which are therein, but also take place with the divine approval and the approval of angelic beings which are heavenly. Hence, it is to be noted, that guilt inheres in the soul of him who sins mortally and grace is corrupted or ceases to be, for which reason he who sins mortally is under the debt of eternal damnation, provided he does not do penance, and, if he persists in this guilt, he is separated from the companionship of pilgrims in grace. But in penance there is a remedy, by which guilt is deleted, grace conferred, the chain of damnation broken, and man reunited with the church. This penance is performed by contrition, confession and satisfaction. Contrition, which is sorrow or full pain for sin committed, must include displeasure with the sin already committed, and the sin which may be committed and, in the case — articulo — of necessity, such contrition is enough for salvation. Hence the Saviour, knowing that the mind of the adulteress was full of sorrow, added the words: "Go and sin no more," John 8 : n. For this reason St. Augustine, St. Ambrose and St. Gregory agree in saying that to be penitent is to lament evils done and not to wish to do evils that are to be lamented.

Secondly, it is to be noted that, for the justification of the wicked man there is needed infinite power by which God cleanses from spot and stain and grants grace. Again, God's mercy is needed whereby he relaxes the offense done his Majesty, and the eternal punishment for the debt which would follow if he did not do penance. Therefore, the church often prays, "Almighty and most merciful God," urging the infinite power and mercy of God. But that infinite power is required for the justification of a wicked man is evident because, as Augustine says, "it is easier to create a world than to justify the wicked; the first demands infinite power and consequently also the second [act], and this is the reason why, in the justification of the wicked, the active bestowal of the Holy Spirit is required, which cannot be secured except from God," as Augustine proves in many places, as I have shown in my Tract on Indulgences. And the Master of Sentences, i : 14 [Migne's ed., p. 49], concludes from these words of Augustine and says, "Therefore no men, however holy, can give the Holy Spirit," and the same reasoning applies to the active remission of sins.

Hence in a unique sense the Baptist said of Christ: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," John 1 : 29. On these words Augustine says, Hom. on John, 4 [Nic. Fathers, 7 : 28]: "Let no one presume and say of himself that he takes away the sins of the world. Now, observe the proud against whom John lifted his finger were not yet heretics and yet they were already shown to be such against whom he cried from the river." Wherefore the Jews often ascribed blasphemy to Christ because, esteeming him, though falsely, to be a mere man, they said he was not able of himself to forgive sins, because sin is not forgiven by a mere word except only as the offense against God is relaxed. But who forgives an injury except the person against whom it is done or against whose subject it is done? For God, in giving power of this kind, first forgives the injury against Himself before His vicar can forgive. Hence on this point Ambrose says: "He alone forgives sins who alone died for us. The Word of God

forgives sins. The priest is the judge. The priest performs his function and does not exercise the way of any power," de Penitentia, i [Friedberg, i : 1170]. To the same purport speaks Jerome, whom the Master of Sentences quotes (see above), and Gregory, 1:1, Paulus. The same holds good for the retention and binding of sins. Hence the Master of Sentences, 4 : 18, 4 [Migne, p. 376], adducing these authorities and reasons, concludes, that "God alone washes a man within clean from the stain of sin and from the debt of eternal punishment," and he closes thus: "By these and many other testimonies it is taught that God alone and of Himself forgives sins; and just as He forgives some so He retains the sins of others."

But some one will say, if God alone can forgive and retain sins, why did He say to the apostles and their vicars: " Whatsoever ye shall loose," etc, . . . and "whosoever sins ye retain," etc? What, therefore, is it for a priest to loose or bind sins, to remit or retain? To the first the Master of Sentences (see above) gives answer and says: "Priests also bind when they impose the satisfaction of penance upon those who confess. They loose when in view of the satisfaction they forgive anything or admit those purged by it to participation in the sacraments." To the second Richard answers well in his Power of Loosing and Binding [Migne, 196 : 116455.], when he says:2 "What is it to remit sins except to relax the sentence of punishment which is due for sins, and by relaxing to absolve ? And what is it to retain sins but not to absolve those not truly penitent? For many of those who confess seek absolution who nevertheless do not want to wholly abandon their sins. Many promise caution for the future but do not want to make satisfaction. All of this sort, in so far as they do not truly repent, beyond doubt ought not to be forgiven. For truly to repent is to be sorry for past wrong-doing, to confess with a strong purpose, to make satisfaction, and to take heed to oneself with all caution. Those who do penance in this way, they ought to be forgiven; and to be remitted in any other way without absolution, this is to retain sins. Now, from the things already said we may clearly understand that, in the forgiveness of sins, the Lord does by and of Himself what is done through his minister, that is, he does not by Himself and through the office of ministers, but He fully of Himself looses the bond of obduracy; and He looses by Himself and His minister the debt of eternal damnation; truly He looses by his ministers the debt of future purgation. The power of the first kind of forgiveness He reserves for Himself alone. The second kind of forgiveness He imparts by Himself and His minister. But the third kind, the Lord is accustomed to impart not as much by Himself as by his minister. Properly, indeed, is it said that the Lord absolves the truly penitent from the bond of damnation. None the less it is true that the priest does this and the Lord, 1 the Lord in view of the conversion of the heart, and the priest in view of the confession of the mouth. For the confession of the heart alone suffices in the case of the truly penitent unto salvation. And the case — articulus — of necessity excludes both the confession of the mouth and absolution by the priest." Thus much Richard.

From these things the conclusion is drawn that God predestinates from eternity, and He executes in time the absolution of a person who is to be saved and the remission of his sin, before such a person is absolved on earth by the minmilitant is in a sense prior to the binding and loosing of the church triumphant and vice versa.

But God's act of binding or loosing is absolutely first. And it is evident, it would be blasphemy to assert that a man may remit an offense done to so great a Lord, with the Lord himself approving the remission. For by the universal law and practice followed by the Lord, He himself must loose or bind first, if any

vicar looses or binds. And for us no article of the faith ought to be more certain than the impossibility of any one of the church militant to absolve or bind except in so far as he is conformed to the head of the church, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hence, the faithful should be on his guard against this form of statement: "If the pope or any other pretends that he binds or looses by a particular sign, then by that very fact the offender is loosed or bound." For by conceding this, they have to concede that the pope is impeccable as is God, for otherwise he is able to err and to misuse the key of Christ. And it is certain that as impossible as it is for the figure of a material key to open anything when the substance is wanting, so impossible is it for Christ's vicar to open or shut except as he conforms himself to the key of Christ which first opens and shuts. For just as Christ the firstborn of many brethren and the first-fruits of them that sleep was the first to enter the kingdom, so he alone and above all could have had committed to him the spiritual kingdom which was altogether closed from the time our first parents lied until he himself came. And the same is to be said in regard to any opening or closing whatever which pertains to the heavenly country. And it is plain that every vicar of Christ, so long as he continues to walk in this world, may err, even in those things which concern the faith and the keys of the church as those knew who wrote the Chronicles ; 1 for Peter himself, Christ's first vicar, sinned in these regards.

Likewise, God is the only being who cannot be ignorant as to whose sins may be remitted, and He the only being who cannot be moved by a wrong motive and judge unjust judgment. But any vicar may be ignorant as to whose sins ought to be remitted, and he may be moved by a wrong motive in binding or loosing. Therefore, if he refuse to impart absolution to one truly penitent and confessing, moved by anger or greed, he cannot by his act bind such a person in guilt. Similar would be the case with one who came with a lying confession, as happens very often, and the priest, not knowing his hypocrisy, should impart to him the words of absolution. Undoubtedly he does not thereby absolve, for the Scriptures say, Wisdom [of Solomon] 1:4: "The Holy Spirit evades a feigned act of worship." In the first case, just noted, the vicar alleges that he bound or forgave sins and did not; and in the second case he alleges that he loosed or remitted sins and did not. And it is evident how great the illusion may be of those who administer the keys and of those who do not truly repent. For it is necessary that a person, wishing to be absolved, be first so disposed in his will that he is sorry for his guilt, and then have the purpose to sin no more. Hence, all priests combined — who are at the same time vicars — are not able to absolve from sins him who wishes to go on sinning and who does not wish to lament his sins.

So all together are not able to bind a righteous man or retain his sins when he humbles himself with his whole heart and has a contrite heart, a thing which God does not despise. Wherefore St. Jerome, commenting on Matt. 16 : 19 [Migne's ed., 26 : 118], "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," etc, says: "Some not understanding this passage appropriate something of the arrogance of the Pharisees so as to think that they can damn the guiltless and loose offenders, for with God not the judgment of priests is sought but the life of the guilty."¹ To these words the Master of Sentences, 4 : 18, cap. 6, adds [Migne's ed., p. 375]: "Here it is plainly shown, that God does not follow the sentence of the church which judges in ignorance and deceitfully." He also adds, cap. 8: "Sometimes he who is sent outdoors, that is, outside of holy church, by the priest, is, nevertheless, inside. And he who, by virtue of the truth, is outside, seems to be kept inside by the priest's false sentence." And again he says, 4 : 19, cap. 4 [Migne, p. 382]: That the priest who binds and looses others ought himself to be prudent and just, for otherwise he will put to death souls who do not die and revive souls which do not live, and in this way he turns his power of pronouncing judgment into an instrument of cursing — so that it is said in Mal. 2:2: "I will bless your cursings and curse your blessings." Therefore the vicars of Christ ought to take heed that they do not lightly presume to bind or loose whenever it pleases them.

But the objection is offered concerning higher rank and obedience from the Canon Solita [Friedberg, 2 : 196-199], where Pope Innocent [III] says: "The Lord said to Peter, and in Peter to his successors, 'Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven,' making no exception when he said, 'Whatsoever,' etc." Here it is to be noted that in virtue of the words, "Whatsoever thou shalt loose," Peter could not loosen the Scriptures, for Christ our Saviour said: "The Scripture cannot be broken," John 10 : 35.

Nor, secondly, could he loose one who would not repent, and so he said to Simon Magus: "Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness and pray the Lord if perhaps it may be forgiven you," Acts 8 : 22. Thirdly, Peter had no power to loose the marriage bond, for the Saviour said: "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder," Matt. 19 : 6. And fourthly, he was not able to absolve Judas from sin, because the Saviour said: "Not one of them perished but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled," John 17 : 12.

Therefore, if Peter in virtue of that saying of Christ, "Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," had presumed to have power to loose in any of the four cases just adduced, would they have been loosed in heaven ? Certainly not ! For the will of God would have opposed it in the case of the Scriptures, marriage, Judas, and in the case of the one refusing in his pertinacity to repent. Therefore, it does not follow that the vicar, who thinks that he is able to loose or to bind whomsoever he chooses, really does it. On this point, St. Augustine, *de vera et falsa Penitentia*,¹ speaks, when he says: "God, who had already raised up Lazarus from the grave, offered Lazarus to the disciples that they might loose him,² thereby showing the power of loosing imparted to priests: and God said, £ Whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven/ that is, I, God, and all the ranks of the heavenly army and aU the saints who give praise in that heavenly glory join with you in confirming those whom ye bind and loose. He did not say, 'whom ye think ye bind and loose, but those towards whom ye exercise works of righteousness or mercy. But your other works done towards sinners I do

not recognize.'" Thus much Augustine, who limits the clergy's power to loose or bind as it stands in their own estimation.

To the same purport are the words of Richard, de potest. ligandi et solvendi [Migne, 196 : 1167]. He says: "So far thou goest and sayest: if I am not able to bind or absolve anything or to retain and remit the sins of all persons whatsoever, what does that mean, which was said in a general way unto Peter: 'Whatsoever thou shalt bind, whatsoever thou shalt loose' ? Just as it was also laid down as a general rule spoken to the apostles in common : 'Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.' Properly should this question move you had the Lord said to Peter, 'Whatsoever thou shalt wish to bind shall be bound, and whatsoever thou shalt wish to loose shall be loosed,' but he did not say this nor did he wish to be understood in this way — namely, if any one shall wish to bind what he is not able to bind, shall that sin, therefore, be bound? Who said this? Therefore, he did not say, whatsoever thou shalt wish to bind, but whatsoever thou shalt bind, shall be bound in heaven. He verily is bound who is bound by the just debt of satisfaction in accordance with the nature of his confession. That person is really absolved by the sacerdotal office whose sin is justly remitted in view of a deserved satisfaction. God, therefore, binds and absolves those who by a priest's sentence justly deserve absolution,¹ but, beyond any doubt, the sins of those are retained to whom the absolution of sins has been justly denied and not those to whom it has been unjustly denied.

"What the Lord, therefore, said to Peter means the same as if he had said in other words: 'What has been bound or loosed by thee, shall be bound or loosed with me. He who is held with thee by the command of a required satisfaction is held with me as a debtor owing the same satisfaction. And because he deserved from thee the just absolution for his sins he shall not at my bar be held bound any further.' After this manner we should also understand that which Christ said to all his apostles: 'Whosoever sins ye remit, they shall be remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.' Assuredly the sins of offenders will be remitted or retained with the Lord which have been properly remitted or retained by his ministers, the priests — both of which are truly and really done by them when done in accord with the canonical rite; nevertheless, neither of these things can priests do at their personal pleasure, but only for desert — merito — and according to the rite as instituted." Thus much Richard.

From Augustine and from this declaration by Richard, it is plain that it does not follow: Christ said to Peter or to any vicar of his: "Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth," that is, in the church militant, "shall be loosed also in heaven," that is, in the church triumphant — therefore, whatsoever thou shalt wish to loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven. And it is evident that by this clause the bestowment falls on every person that is truly penitent. And also, in view of the words, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind," the bestowment falls upon the impenitent, for the loosing applies to every truly penitent person, the binding to the impenitent. The same is true of retaining and remitting.

Therefore, Christ's disciple ought to be on his guard against the fallacy of antichrist, when the following course of argument is pursued: Whatsoever Christ's vicar shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven, but this faithful layman who does not wish to give money for his absolution, him he binds on earth. Therefore, this layman is bound in heaven. Likewise, whatsoever Christ's vicar shall loose on

earth shall be loosed also in heaven, but him who is not contrite and yet is willing to give money, him he looses on earth. Therefore, is he loosed also in heaven. The case is similar if it be argued: Whatsoever Christ's vicar looses on io earth shall be loosed also in heaven, but him, who is evidently a reprobate, he looses on earth in the agony of death, therefore he is loosed also in heaven. In these arguments the minor premise is wanting in strength; for unless the said man, in the case of the minor premise, binds himself by a bad will or looses himself by true contrition, the minor premise is false. And, according to Richard, the argument is to be rectified in this way: "Whatsoever Christ's vicar shall properly bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven. But this faithful layman who does not wish to give money, him he binds properly on earth." Thus the falsehood of the minor premise is made to appear. In a similar way the other arguments are to be corrected. And, if the objection be raised that a Christian ought to be in doubt as to when a priest binds and looses according to the rite and when not, the reply is to be made that the opposite follows [we should not be in doubt], since we ought to believe that the priest binds and absolves only in cases when he ministers according to the rules of Christ's law. And when he exceeds that law, then he alleges that he is binding and loosing, but does not bind and loose.

Then as to Innocent's words: "The Lord made no exception when he said to Peter: ' Whatsoever,' etc." If Innocent understands a bestowment in any case whatsoever, when Peter or his vicar might allege they were binding, then Innocent's meaning would be false. For then, through a subordinate assumption, an improper conclusion would follow, the argument running thus: whatsoever Peter or his vicar shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven. But this holy man he alleges he is binding on earth: therefore he is bound in heaven. The conclusion is false and impossible. The minor proposition is true or may be true. Therefore the application of Innocent's major proposition would be false. But, if Innocent means with Richard, Augustine, and Gregory that the bestowment is for that for which binding and loosing are intended then it is true that when the Lord said, " whatsoever, " he made no exception. For it means this: Whatsoever that is of true penitence thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Likewise, whatsoever that is of impenitence thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven. And with this the Little Glosses of the Decretists agree, which say that, when the key does not make a mistake, and consequently when a righteous thing is done on earth, it shall be confirmed in heaven.

For every man who, being penitent, is according to the rite loosed on earth by Christ's vicar on the earth, he also is loosed in heaven — just as he who has believed and is baptized shall be saved, and he who has believed in love shall be saved finally. For "believe" here is to be accepted as in John 3 : 36, "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life," and if it shall be axgued that whosoever believeth on the Son hath eternal life: every Christian believes on the Son of God, therefore every Christian hath eternal life — or, again, if it be argued that whosoever believeth on the Son of God hath eternal life but that reprobate, who is in grace, believes on the Son of God, therefore that reprobate has eternal life — in these cases the conclusion is false. And both these conclusions are invalid, because "to believe" is one thing in the major premise and another thing in the minor. Hence, in order to correct the statement the argument must run in this wray: Whosoever believes with love in the Son of God and perseveres. In this case the consequence is good [he shall be finally saved]. But the minor statement the objector should prove [namely, that every Christian believes with love of God]. Similar is the case with the second

conclusion and its minor premise: namely, " that reprobate who is in grace believes with love in the Son of God and perseveres." This reasoning is false.

From the things already said, it is clear what the power of the keys is and what is catholic belief on the subject, namely, that every priest of Christ ordained according to the rite has the sufficient power to confer the sacraments appertaining to him and consequently to absolve a person truly contrite from sin, howbeit power of this kind, so far as the exercise of it goes, is for good reasons bound in the case of many persons, as appears near the beginning of this chapter. But how this power belonged to the apostles equally is stated in the Decretum, Dist. 21, in novo [Friedberg, 1 : 69], where it is said:1 "The other apostles with him, that is, Peter, by reason of equal fellowship received honor and power. . . . When these died, the bishops arose in their place." And here the Gloss, Argumentum, says that the bishops are all equal in apostolic power, so far as the order and ground of consecration go. St. Cyprian, 24 : 1, cap. Loquitur [Friedberg, 1 : 971], says: "He gave to all the apostles after his resurrection equal power."

Hence it would be foolish to believe that the apostles received from Christ no spiritual gifts except what were derived by them immediately and purely — simpliciter — from Peter, for Christ said to all: "Whatsoever ye shall loose on earth," Matt. 18 : 18; also, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them," John 20 : 23; and again, "This do ye in remembrance of me," Luke 22 : 19; and still again, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the consummation of the ages," Matt. 28 : 19, 20.

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