

**THE SACRAMENTS:
A DOGMATIC
TREATISE, VOL. III**

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The sacraments: a dogmatic treatise, Vol. III by Joseph Pohle & Arthur Preuss

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JOSEPH POHLE & ARTHUR PREUSS

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TREATISE, VOL. III**

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X

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THE SACRAMENTS

A DOGMATIC TREATISE

BY

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INTRODUCTION

I. PENANCE AS A VIRTUE, OR REPENTANCE.— Before the institution of the Sacrament of Penance the only means by which an adult sinner could become reconciled to God, was the virtue of penance (*virtus poenitentiae*), *i. e.* perfect contrition coupled with a firm purpose of amendment.¹ Even to-day this remains the only means of justification for those who live in good faith outside the Church.

a) That penance, in the sense of penitence or repentance, is a distinct virtue is not admitted by all theologians. Alexander of Hales defines penance as the sum-total of all those virtues violated by sin. Durandus classes it as a part of distributive justice. Cardinal Cajetan subordinates it to the three virtues of charity, religion, and retributive justice. We hold that penitence is a distinct virtue for the reason that it has its own formal object. This formal object lies in the fact that sin is an offense against God, expiable by contrition and satisfaction.

That penitence can be called forth by other virtues does not argue that it is not an independent virtue, any more than obedience, which all admit to be a virtue,

¹ Cfr. Ez. XVIII, 30; 2 Cor. VII, 9.