

men—to make them the object of His care and righteousness. He reversed the principle of righteousness or justice, which existed in the mind of the Pharisees. He scandalised Himself, if I may use the term, by that propensity to associate Himself with the vilest and the lowest, to make the most despicable and vile the object of his loving kindness. Why so? Because He had come not merely to preach repentance in general to sinners, but he had come to seek and to save that which would otherwise perish. He came to seek admission into the heart of each sinner. He went to the custom-house to seek out the publicans, or those who were looked on as most immersed in sin, and most reprobate in their outward conduct. When the prophet Amos was counselled by Amaziah to exercise his prophetic mission no longer at Bethel, he replied that he was no prophet, neither a prophet's son; that he was a poor wretched man, and that his occupation was mean and low; that he was a herdsman, and gatherer of sycamore fruit; but the Lord took him as he followed this his ordinary avocation, and commissioned him to prophecy unto Israel—(Amos vii., 14-15.) And from the very sycamore tree Jesus would pluck rich and ripe fruit. Zaccheus hid himself in its branches, waiting the approach of the Redeemer; and there it was that he was brought to a new and spiritual life, through having his sins forgiven.—(Luke xix., 2-10.) But not only there, upon the tree of infamy, upon the cross itself, He would seek to extend the ineffable compassion of His heart, and pardon him who, but a few moments before, reproached and reviled Him. His companions on the cross were thieves, notorious for their sins; yet on that cross was Christ to win the brightest fruits of His purchase, and take with Him that day the penitent thief to be with Him in His own paradise.—(Luke xxiii. 39-43.)

And now, my brethren, first let us see what was our blessed Saviour's general course with respect to matters connected with this doctrine. Did he leave it merely to inward acts on the part of others? Did He himself permit the efficacy, or supposing He permitted it, to be connected with interior acts without any exterior process? Baptism was instituted by Him; for what purpose? For the forgiveness of original sin. I cannot now enter into the questions agitated among different bodies of Christians as to the validity or non-validity of baptismal regeneration. I will assume for the present that all who have adhered to the old, the primitive doctrines of the Church, hold that baptism is a sacrament, the means by which sin is forgiven—(Acts ii. 38.) Now, original sin is the sin which is committed once, but which, when once expiated or washed away, can no more be contracted. And yet our Lord is pleased to establish an outward action—a process by which the certainty of the forgiveness of sin can be ascertained. For this purpose He instituted a sacrament. Now, my brethren, reason with yourselves. Is it according to your minds (but we are at a low stage of our examination)—can you suppose that our Blessed Saviour, who came to die for man, for the washing away of all his sins, should have imparted a gift so definite, so distinct, and, at the same time, so efficacious for the cleansing of that sin, of which we are not conscious, which we ourselves cannot redeem, of which we cannot have but an obscure impression upon our consciences; and yet should have left us without any tangible, sensible, definite provision, for the cleansing of that which alone we may say forms the whole world of individual sin—that which opposes man in his way to heaven—that which may properly be said to be as a millstone tied round his neck to drag his soul down to perdition—that which stands as the great, terrible obstacle between him and heaven? It is true that the death of Jesus cleanses from sin, expiates every sort of sin; but can you bring yourself to suppose that for original sin a provision should be made to last as long as the Church existed—as long as the world should endure—and that no means should be instituted for the application of that redemption to the soul; that man, from the cradle to the grave—from the infant of a day old to the patriarch of a hundred years—should be left a blank, without any light to cheer him on in his otherwise gloomy and dismal path—without any distinct act that could be performed, and which would give him to understand that, as the lost child, he had been found again, and restored to a purity higher and brighter far than that which man in his brief, sinless sojourn in Eden enjoyed? "Who hath entered into the counsels of God, or who hath been His counsellor?" If no such means have been instituted, there is a total disproportion between what our Saviour has done for that which is less, and that which is supposed not to be done for that which is not only greater, but infinitely more. Our Blessed Saviour atoned for sin, and left a clear and distinct means for obliterating from the soul the stain of original sin, and yet left us in uncertainty and doubt whether or not similar means were instituted by Him to save the soul from sinking into perdition under the weight of still more fearful and accumulated transgression! Catholic doctrine admits of no such discrepancies in the doings of Providence, but equalises all, and shows that some efficacious sacramental means have been appointed in the one case as in the other, and that resulting from all that He was pleased to do. Oh, my brethren, I have said that our dear Lord acted practically, with regard to the forgiveness of sins. He did not merely say "Repent, and your sins shall be forgiven you;" but He definitely forgave sins by words, by actions, and under circumstances which could leave no doubt in regard to the doctrine to be adopted and practically applied by the Church in after ages.

Here is our Divine Lord entered into the house of the Pharisees to eat bread. And after He has eaten His feast, there is being prepared for His divine and compassionate soul a feast of love, far more congenial to His taste, far more acceptable to His heart than the hospitality of the Pharisee—one which we may

say He Himself hath prepared. And we think we shall not be far from the truth in saying that He has gone into the house of the Pharisee only that that touching scene of forgiveness might there, in the most public manner, take place. Behold, there stands at the door of that house a form, it may be, not richly attired, but scantily dressed—one who has long been the by-word of the whole city—notorious for her profligacy and transgression—a public sinner, one from whom the Pharisee would deem it his safety to turn away with disgust, to whom he would say, in the pride of his boasted Phariseism, "Stand by, for I am holier than thou." She stands at a distance, and looks on Him who is there, not indeed regarding Him with the eye of presumption, but calmly continuing her observations. "Look on Him," say ye upholders of anti-Catholic doctrine, "believe on Him, and your sins shall be forgiven. What need of more. There is your Saviour; exercise one act of faith in Him." "O thou, my heart," feels the trembling penitent, "thou hast seen Him; yet in that act thou inwardly exercisedst thou hast not felt thy sins forgiven thee!" And Magdalen is intended to be a model of what the Church is to continue in ages to come. There must be tears; there must be acts of supplication; there must be acknowledgment of guilt; there must be the ever falling into the dust of sin, the ever incurring the bitter scorn of men, so that from the lips of Christ's Vicegerents and Ministers on earth the words of forgiveness may fall. There is an instinct in nature which is more powerful than religious principles; and, in spite even of the coldest system of Christianity, that which would embody the whole of its power in the individual, there is a feeling in the human heart which this cannot draw out, and of which the penitent in the opposite system gives abundant demonstration of its strength and growth. Tell him not he is forgiven who merely repents, who merely believes himself to view the merits of the Saviour, and appropriates those merits to himself. Did your child who had grievously offended you, whom perhaps you had disinherited, come thus, you would spurn him from your door. You would not perhaps resist him did he come, prodigal-like, entreating your kindness and compassion upon his knees, as you would say, "I cannot resist this evidence of sorrow;—my child thou art forgiven." And thus it is that Jesus demands of Magdalen the outward evidence of inward penitential grief in order that she may be forgiven. In the mere abstract exercise of faith, or in a mere self-appropriation of the atonement or merits of Christ to herself, this could not be evinced. She must weep; she must give outward demonstrations of her wretchedness; she must acknowledge the transgressions which she had committed. And, oh, that Blessed Redeemer, in the plenitude of His benign compassion, gave her assurance of forgiveness; but the absolution must be an outward act, expressed in words as clear as words can be. He tells her that her sins are forgiven, because she hath loved much, and bids her go, and sin no more—(Luke vii. 36-40.) Our Saviour exacts outward actions, and will have a distinct act of forgiveness pronounced. Such is His method, then, when on earth He forgave sin.

To a Catholic, my brethren, it is a paradox how persons who call themselves Christians—believers in the words of Christ—can find a certain delight in treating what their fellow-Christians at any rate conscientiously consider to be the truth as prompted by the foulest motives. Were it spoken among heathen nations that there are among Christians something like two hundred millions, who believe with their whole hearts that Jesus Christ Our Lord had redeemed man, and came on earth to forgive sin, and had established means by which this was to be done, consisting in the humble acknowledgment of transgression and the pronouncing of pardon over the penitent, and that this body should be characterised by a body of Christians as acting from the worst intentions; that this body of Christians should actually consider it a duty in every possible way to treat this doctrine of the existence of a sacrament for the forgiveness of sin as atrocious, as intended only for the vilest of purposes—were such spoken among heathen nations, how astonished they would be. Now, that does include the great, principal objection of the present day; and an objection into which I cannot enter, because it would be profaning this holy day, even to bring before you a small portion, even mitigated, of what has been written and said upon this subject. It is, for instance, asserted as boldly as though it were a recognised truth, that the confessional is the means by which sin is rather strengthened than cured. Now, how am I to meet a charge like this? Were you to be told that in the neighboring kingdom of France, or even here, there is a large class, say two millions, living amongst us, with whom you associate every day, whom you meet in society, whom you treat with the greatest blandness and affableness, in whose lives you will at least observe nothing beyond the common frailties of your other friends, but living in the habitual practice of a system so vile and corrupt, deepening and hardening themselves in crime, and yet cannot be discovered in their life or conversation, or without their revolting in tens of thousands from such a system. And yet to believe this is not a whit more absurd or monstrous than to believe that such people delight in the most revolting scenes of profligacy. What would not be the consequences of such a system? But are you not aware, my brethren, that in every rank of society, to whatever class you belong, you will find your equals, both in intellect and delicacy of sentiment? There are numerous, very numerous converts who have joined this system in the full maturity of their virtue and good sense, and will you tell me that all these have fallen into such a snare? Go and ask, interrogate some one—beg of him for God's sake to tell you if there is a certain scale of charges followed in regard to the administration of this sacrament. He

would laugh in your face, and marvel how any one could believe such a thing.

There is one mode, and one only, by which Catholics can meet such an inundation of scurrilities,—one mode beyond that of simple reason to which they have recourse. It is the consolation of their own hearts. My brethren, it is nearly ten years since I treated of this subject in this place. I would not at that moment, and, God knows, I did not flatter myself that my days should be prolonged till now. I contemplated long before this meeting the face of God in heaven. Could any one believe that I would make up my mind to stand before the tribunal of God after having under the cloak of administering a sacred ordinance, under the pretence of obeying His holy Word, acted the part of an infernal fiend in dragging souls to perdition? Will any one believe this to be possible? Now, I stand before you again, and God knows how soon I may be summoned before His presence; and I say, standing now in the presence of that great and holy God, that a fouler calumny was never spoken against the truth or the Church of God, and that so far from its being the case that this sacrament is the means whereby sin is enabled to reach its highest power, whereby men and women are led to wallow in deeper sinks of pollution, profligacy, and dissipation, it is the very reverse, inasmuch that any one who will appeal to the experience of either penitent or priest, will feel that it is the ministration of an ordinance which nourishes holiness, humility, and sanctification; which gives to the Church its brightest examples of spotless virtue and noble deeds; which secures to the soul the greatest measure of peace and happiness, and which forms the link between priest and people by which the one lends on the other to the palm of victory and the crown of glory. I fling into the flames those tracts, extensively circulated, in which the confessional is traduced in the most infamous language. And the day will come when the writer of these tracts and the priesthood of the Catholic Church will stand face to face, and let him take care lest he be found not only to have calumniated the ordinance of God, but to have blasphemed the Most High in the gifts which he gave to men, and to have committed sacrilege against the most holy of His institutions. God will judge between the Catholic priesthood in this country and those traducers both of His own sacred ordinance and of its administrators, and he will also judge those who have been the blind instruments of others, and who have thus suffered themselves to be led away from the truth.

My brethren, if our Blessed Saviour has meant to teach us anything in His Gospel, it is the Catholic doctrine on this subject—the forgiveness of sin.—Who can read the history of the Prodigal, wandering away from that home in which his wishes and wants were attended to, and it may be anticipated—who can behold him, driving on in a reckless career of profligacy, dissipating the substance which had been given to him, plunging with head-long rapidity into the midst of sin and debauchery, and ruining alike his moral and physical constitution—who can witness his career of folly at an end, and behold the deep remorse and bitter regret which cankers in his heart and makes him walk with disconsolate brow and almost tottering step—who can observe the resolution laying hold of his heart that he would arise and go to his Father's house, fall on his knees, confess his deep and manifold guilt, and supplicate his mercy—who can hear the kind words of forgiveness spoken, and see the magnificence of the banquet spread for the welcome and entertainment of the pardoned transgressor—what Catholic can view all this, and not feel that therein he reads his own history? He hears through the ministry of God upon earth the words of forgiveness; he receives from him the full investiture of privileges; he returns to God, and the whole Church in Heaven and on earth rejoice over the child that was lost, but now is found. Oh, happy, blessed one, who is thus restored to that happy home from which he had wandered!

Then, dearly beloved brethren, you who know and believe in the existence of this glorious privilege, engage in it now and receive through it the peace of reconciliation. And you, who believe not in its existence, come to Jesus, that He may raise you from your unbelief, and forgive your transgressions, that thus you may feel His peace dwelling in your hearts here as an earnest and a pledge of enjoying Him throughout eternity in the golden mansions of bliss above.

CATHOLIC INTELLIGENCE.

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE.—The usual monthly meeting of the committee was held on Wednesday last at the committee-rooms, 27, Lower Ormond-quay, Dublin. The following members were present:—His Grace the Lord Primate in the chair, the Very Rev. Dr. Leahy, V.G., the Rev. Dr. Cooper, the Rev. Dr. O'Hanlon, Thomas Boylan, Esq., William Nugent Skelly, Esq., Michael Errington, Esq., Charles Bianconi, Esq. The several communications received since last meeting were read; letters from the Rev. Francis McGinity, detailing the very successful and steady progress of his mission in London, and also from the Rev. Missionaries in the United States. The amount of receipts since last meeting was announced to be £1,242 0s 6d.

The Clergy of this diocese are directed by the Archbishop, to add the prayer to the Holy Ghost, at Mass, on every day until the adjournment of the National Council, which opens at Baltimore, on the fourth Sunday after Easter; and the faithful are earnestly requested to offer up their prayers to obtain the light and guidance of the Holy Spirit for the Fathers who are to be assembled on an occasion of so much importance to the welfare of the Church in the United States.—Cincinnati Catholic Telegraph.

DEATH OF THE REV. EDWARD M'SWEENEY.—The Rev. Edward M'Sweeney, of the Order of St. Francis of Cappicino, died in Church-street, Dublin, on the 8th instant, in the forty-fifth year of his age. The Rev. gentleman commenced his Missionary career in Church-street chapel, 1835. His labors in the Lord's vineyard were arduous and increasing.—His appeals from the pulpit, on behalf of the widow, the orphan, and the destitute, are still fresh in the memory of the citizens of Dublin. His premature death was caused by protracted disease of the lungs, which he bore with Christian patience and resignation to the will of the Almighty. May he rest in peace.—Tablet.

DEATH OF THE REV. JAMES O'KANE.—It is with deep regret, we have to record this week, the death of the Rev. James O'Kane, Pastor of St. Joachim's Church, Frankford. This melancholy event took place on Saturday last, at the pastoral residence, and was caused by the over zealous attendance of the Reverend gentleman to his Clerical duties. The Rev. Gentleman was a native of the Diocese of Derry in Ireland.—Philadelphia Catholic Instructor.

CONVERSION AND DEATH OF AN INDIAN CHIEF.—We have been permitted to make the following extract from a letter recently received in this city from Rev. Father Bax, S. J., Missionary amongst the Osage Indians:—"We have had the misfortune of losing the Head Chief of the great and little Osages, called Pahuska, George White Hair, whose extraordinary talents are known to all the White Settlements of West Missouri, and who was so much admired by the Indian Department and by General Taylor, when on a visit at Washington, in the fall of 1849. His wife and himself were admitted to the Church before his death.—Catholic Miscellany, Charleston.

CATHOLICITY IN NEW SOUTH WALES.—The Catholic religion, we are happy to say, is in a most flourishing condition in New South Wales. The census has been taken lately, according to which we Catholics are in number 56,899. This number is presided over by forty Clergymen, viz., an Archbishop, a Bishop Coadjutor, a Vicar-General, an Archdeacon, a Dean of Sydney, three Rural Deans, and 32 Missionary Priests. The country Clergy are stationed at the undermentioned places, which we subjoin:—At Paramatta, Maitland, Moreton Bay, Ipswich, Bathurst, Goulburn, Wollongong, Campbelltown, Newcastle, Liverpool, Windsor, Hartley, Penrith, Carcoar, Singleton, Queanbeyan, Yass, Berina, Macdonal River, and Bronlee. These indefatigable Missioners at the above-mentioned places administer to the spiritual necessities of their people, scattered over a distance coastwise about 800 miles, and into the interior nearly 400. In our future communications we propose giving the names of those Missioners, for the edification of your Irish readers, as the great majority of them are Irish, their missions, their churches and chapels, and their style of architecture in New South Wales. In our sister colonies, to which in future communications we will have occasion to allude, religion is in a forward state; they are undoubtedly the most important mission undertaken in modern times. The great labors of Archbishop Polding, God has greatly blessed.—Correspondent of Tablet.

AFFAIRS OF ROME.—Cardinal Bernetti, Cardinal Deacon of S. Lorenzo-in-Damasso, and Vice-Chancellor of the Holy Roman Church, died on the 21st ultimo at Fermo, where he was born on December 29th, 1779. This death makes vacant one of the most considerable offices of the Pontifical court. The post of Vice-Chancellor of the Roman Church is so elevated that it has always been considered the first after the Sovereign Pontificate. St. Bernard calls it so in his 93rd Epistle. Cardinal Zabarella calls the Vice-Chancellor the right eye of the Pope, and the greatest personage of the Roman court. This eminent office is the only one, with that of the Camerlengo, the titular of which is created and promulgated in Consistory of Cardinals, whom the Pope interrogates in these words:—Quid vobis videtur?

IRISH INTELLIGENCE.

PROSELYTISM IN THE WEST.

(To the Editor of the Tablet.)

Ross, Clonburr, March 23rd, 1852.

It is consoling to witness the efforts that are now making to protect the poor innocent children in every part along those mountains from the many snares laid for them. The great danger they were in could not be conceived. Human nature, however fallen, cannot, I believe, divest itself of some lingering deference to public opinion. Such a check, however, could have little or no restraint amid the cabins and the simple peasantry of the mountains; and hence it is that the violence, the blasphemy, and the perjury, among lay and clerical as were brought lately to light in Tuam, Ballinrobe, Castlebar, and other places, where there was a facility of investigation, are temperate, are moderation itself, compared with the fiendish ferocity we were doomed repeatedly to witness. I think, however, the evil is now all over the country manifestly on the decline.

When I compare the present appearance of this place with what it was a few years ago, I am indeed surprised. God, who can avert evil, or produce good from the most lawless passions of the human heart, has evidently made the aversion of the Missioners instrumental in defeating the works of Satan.

Some time ago the laborers in the vineyard took notice—indeed there could be no mistake—that the immediate relatives of the Parson were attended by a peculiar blessing in the increase and multiplication of their flocks—I mean bullocks and sheep. This gave umbrage to the brethren. There was a remonstrance; it was not heeded. Stimulated with the liberty by which they were made free, one party seceded under the leadership of the head school-master. A desperate battle ensued. The vulgar crowd took no share in it. None were engaged but Parsons, schoolmasters, Scripture-readers, Irish teachers, &c., &c. For seven suc-