

Kingdom of God. The grace of regeneration is said to be inherent in baptism, infallibly, as it is attached to it by the Divine institution of our Redeemer, it is infallibly imparted unless when the incredulity, or perverseness of the receiver opposes an obstacle to its operation. This purifying, regenerating, and saving virtue inherent in Baptism according to Catholic doctrine, is ascribed to the laver by St. Paul in the most unequivocal terms, Tit. iii. 5. etc. "We ourselves also, he says, were some time unwise, incredulous, erring, slaves to divers desires and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared not by the words of jessays, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the laver of regeneration, and renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom he hath poured forth upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we may be heirs; according to hope of life everlasting.

From this general doctrine of the Catholic church relative to the saving effects of baptism it is not to be inferred, that all who receive the sacred ordinances are infallibly regenerated, or that their eternal salvation is infallibly secured. No; we have too many reasons to believe that all who are baptized shall not be saved. Simon the magician, as we read, Acts viii. remained in the Gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity, although baptism had been administered to him by an Apostle because "his heart was not right in the sight of God." Yet the efficacy of the Sacrament is not taken away, because an individual deprives himself of its saving benefits. When by her perverse disposition the soul remains in sin, although externally washed with the purifying stream, she receives indeed the character of the child, although she be not lovely, because destitute of sanctifying grace. When through human weakness a regenerated soul violates her baptismal engagements she she forfeit the privileges of a child without ceasing to bear the impress. In a general sense, all baptized men are children of God because they received that character by means of the Sacrament of regeneration, but their final acceptance depends on their correspondence with the grace by which they have been raised to that dignity.

The well known fact objected to our doctrine—of early symptoms of corrupted nature in regenerated children, even ere they begin to live, and the flagrant transgressions of God by Christian adults is easily reconciled with what we have hitherto said upon baptism. Man is both a free agent and a finite being; consequently he can err, and his error, or transgression against the law of God, is sinful, because voluntary; this is actual sin. When by baptism, as explained above, original sin is remitted unto us, we still remain free agents, finite and limited beings; we have not become impeccable. Yet aided by the grace of God the regenerated soul can persevere to the end in its baptismal innocence. Although by the laver of Baptism the fruits of the redemption be abundantly applied to our souls, effacing original sin, (and in adults properly disposed, actual sin also,) restoring us to the dignity of heirs to the kingdom of heaven; yet it has pleased the great disposer of all things that the infirmities and mortality of our bodies, the disorders of the human mind, the weakness and propensities of the human heart, should remain, both as proofs, and melancholy traces of our original degradation. Hence while we are in the condition of *Viatores* on the stage of probation, we are liable by actual transgressions of the law of God, to forfeit our reacquired right to heaven. Not that original sin once cancelled by the laver of Baptism, resumes his empire over the Christian soul—which indeed would be a gross error—but through the voluntary violations of the sacred laws of God. The human passions though indicative of the corruption, weakness, and limitation of our nature are not sinful in themselves; they are left us for our trial and probation.—The great work of our regeneration is not to receive its final consummation, in this life, when we shall become citizens of the new Jerusalem, it is then, if may be said, that we are, truly, and really, restored to our promised inheritance.

What we have hitherto said on the important topic before us is reducible to the following general heads. We are all born children of the wrath of God; this is original sin. From this fallen state it has pleased our Creator, to raise us, through the

passion and death of his Divine Son. The laver of baptism is the medium or instrument by which the human soul that was dead before God, is regenerated and made the adopted child of heaven. There is no virtue, however, ascribed to the sacraments, except as a means divinely chosen, to apply to our souls the merits of the suffering, and the death of our Lord. The power of God and the merits of our Redeemer, are the sources of sacramental efficacy; and a proper state of mind in adults is required to receive the grace which the sacrament from its divine institution is intended to convey.

From the above outlines of our doctrine respecting baptism our friend the constant reader of the Guardian has concluded, that we poor benighted Papists trust for our eternal salvation to trivial ceremonies and a broken covenant of works! Is this not coming to a conclusion at a jump! Poor logician this Antighibbitt correspondent of the Guardian. With regard to what our friend has said, relative to the application of oil in the solemn administration of the Sacrament of baptism, it will suffice to reply that Catholics are taught by their church, that the essence of baptism consists in an ablution made with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with a view to perform the rite instituted by Christ which is practised in the church. Hence we say, I baptize thee, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Every thing else is ritual or ceremonial, and may be omitted without injury to the Sacrament, though it were highly improper to do so, on private authority unless in case of emergency—owing to the universal practice of the church. The anointing the breast and shoulders with oil, is a very ancient rite in the Catholic Church. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. John Chrysostom, St. Gregory the Great make mention of it, as a rite generally used in their days. It has an apt signification, that in "the unction of the breast and shoulders the firmness of faith and perseverance in good works may be designated." The unction with sacred chrism on the crown of the head immediately after Baptism is mentioned in several ancient Liturgical, and Ritual Books. Tertullian who flourished in the end of the second century mentions the ceremony. "Having come forth from the laver, says this ancient writer, we are anointed with blessed unction according to the sacred rite" etc. "The anointing of the head signifies the wisdom which we have in Christ, who is to be our crown and happiness, as it is explained by St. Ambrose.

"This, to conclude with the words of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Kenrick, Catholic Bishop of Philadelphia, whose admirable Treatise on Baptism, the undersigned has followed in the above hurried remarks, all the rites which are used in the administration of baptism are full of signification, and are derived from venerable antiquity. Some of them, may, without temerity be considered of Apostolic origin. To censure them would be to condemn the whole Christian Church in the earliest, and brightest age, and indirectly at least the Apostles themselves, to whom they may be fairly ascribed."

Intending to make the solid principles of the Constant Reader of the Guardian, as embodied in the second part of his epistle the subject of another communication.

I remain, Messrs Editors, &c.,

G.A.E.L.

Antigonish, 11th June, 1847.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We have received a Letter signed *A Protestant* and dated from the North West Arm, in which the writer says that there are some Protestants now lying sick of Fever in Melville Island, and complains that no Protestant Minister has yet visited that desolate abode of suffering and death.—The writer indulges in some reflections on the punctual and daily ministrations of our clergy, and the apparent indifference of others. We are unwilling however, for obvious reasons, to publish his communication. We can't forget that Protes-