

THE CANADA BAPTIST MAGAZINE.

No. 5.

MONTREAL, NOVEMBER, 1839.

VOL. III.

FOR THE CANADA BAPTIST MAGAZINE.

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

By this is meant the doctrine of the Church of England, which teaches, in its catechism, that an infant, by baptism, is made 'a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.' It is not, however, pretended that the tenet is peculiar to that ecclesiastical body; for it is well known to be held by the Papal Church, together with some others of better repute for purity. But as the Anglican Church is better known among us, and exerts greater influence than the Roman, it is natural to refer to the Book of Common Prayer rather than to the Missal. Now this doctrine is understood generally by the members of the Episcopal Communion, and what influence it has on most of their minds, must be well known to every one conversant with that religious profession. If we except the Evangelical Party, who either do not believe the doctrine of the catechism, or do not make it in its intended and legitimate meaning, we can safely, but not without grief, assert that the members of the Church generally regard the rite of baptism as the certain pledge of salvation; and hence arises the alarm they always feel when an infant is likely to die unchristened, i. e. not

made a Christian, as well as their bitter invectives against the Baptists for denying their children a rite so necessary to salvation. There are not wanting also many churchmen, who consider themselves safe, notwithstanding their ungodly lives, chiefly because they have undergone this magic ceremony, by which, according to the catechism, they received 'the inward and spiritual grace of a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, they were hereby made the children of grace.' What an awful and ruinous delusion! Yet this is one of the first lessons taught by 'the holy Catholic Church'!!! This fact is of itself sufficient to make a deeply serious and conscientious Christian to withdraw from the Episcopal Communion. Even the late Robert Hall, notwithstanding his well-known charity and freedom from theological prejudice, emphatically declared that this one fundamental error was enough to justify dissent from the Anglican Church.

The evangelical clergy have indeed, generally, endeavoured to make this false doctrine a dead letter, and no doubt they have often succeed-