

☞ We take this opportunity to express our grateful thanks to our reverend and dear brethren for their zealous endeavours to promote the circulation of our paper among their people. Some, to be sure, have not been so successful as others; but all, we doubt not have done what they could, to keep our *Catholic* afloat, the first, the only English periodical ever edited in the Canadas in defence of our holy religion; nay, the only one ever edited in this country in any language for so necessary a purpose, except that excellent paper in French, the "*Melanges Religieux*," lately published in Montreal. Our outlay however is great, not less in the year than some thousand dollars. Any thing above the sum required will be at our own disposal; and will be exclusively applied towards liquidating the debt contracted in finishing our Church here; in the purchase of two lots; and the erection of our Presbytery upon them; so as to leave our people here, in this important place, in the full and free enjoyment for ever of the conveniences of their religion. We should hope therefore that no true Catholic will begrudge lending what support he can towards so meritorious a purpose. Should it happen otherwise, and that we are left in the lurch, as we have been on a former occasion; what an everlasting reproach it would be to our people in all the Canadas, that they would not support one single weekly periodical, engaged in refuting the calumnies and misrepresentations of the religious Protestant press; and of shewing the purity of our doctrines to the prejudiced and mis-directed multitude. If so, we need not wonder and complain that we are looked upon as monsters by those who for more than three centuries have been taught to consider us as such; or that, as the Apostles says, "the way of truth should be evil spoken of:" 2 Pet. ii. 2.

☞ All letters and remittances are to be forwarded, free of postage, to the Editor, the Very Rev. Wm. P. McDonald, Hamilton.

THE CATHOLIC.

Hamilton, G. D.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY, 12.

INDULGENCES IN CANADA.—In another column to-day will be found a Letter from the Roman Catholic Bishop at Kingston, offering indulgences if his people will do what he requires of them. We have taken it from a printed circular which, at first, we thought was a hoax; but the channel through which we have received it, convinces us it is authentic. It has been suggested by a discerning friend, that the money is perhaps wanted for erecting another Romish Church in the City of Toronto. We leave the document with our readers to furnish its own condemnation.—CHRISTIAN GUARDIAN, January 5.

For the benefit of the *Guardian*, and *The Church*, (who, by the way, shall be attended to next week) and of those who, like them, sneer at the Catholic doctrine of Indulgences, we subjoin the following Article on that subject, from Bishop Kenrick's work on the "Catholic Doctrine of

Justification," as it appears in the Catholic Herald.

INDULGENCES.

Nothing is less understood, or more misrepresented, than the Catholic doctrine on Indulgences. The rise of the Novatian heresy, in the early part of the third century, led the church to adopt fixed rules of penitential discipline, that whilst resisting the excessive severity which denied pardon to the fallen, she might not relax morals by granting forgiveness on too easy conditions. The penitential works, which before that time had been undertaken by private zeal, or prescribed by the authority of individual prelates, were thenceforth enjoyed by general law, and the period of their performance determined, according to the variety of sins. For seven, ten, or fourteen years, and sometimes until the extremity of life, penitents were engaged in their course of public penance, after the termination of which they were restored to the privileges of Christian communion. It was, however, deemed expedient to empower the bishops to diminish the time, as the fervor or weakness of the penitent might demand, and to restore him by Indulgence to the church. "A power," says Newland, "was given to all bishops by the Council of Nice, to shorten the time, and to relax the severity of those canons. The favor thus granted was called *Indulgence*." (1)

Besides the Council of Nice (2) the Councils of Ancyra, (3) Laodicea, (4) and Carthage (5) sanctioned this usage. This was granted not only in regard to the disposition of the penitents themselves, but sometimes in consideration of the personal merit of those who became intercessors in their behalf. To such as had made an intrepid confession of the faith before the public tribunals in times of persecution, the honorable title of *Confessors* was given; whilst others, who had suffered torments on account of the faith were called *Martyrs*, even although they survived the trial. These martyrs and confessors were justly dear to the church; they were loved and honored for their glorious confession; and accordingly their intercession was all-powerful in obtaining a mitigation of penance for their weaker brethren. Already in the time of Tertullian, at the close of the second century, sinners "were wont to implore peace from the martyrs in prison." (6)—The frequency of their petitions soon, however, degenerated into an abuse, against which the vigorous pen of St. Cyprian was employed. Whilst he condemned the facility with which these privileges were sometimes exercised in favor of apostates, who had given no proofs of their compunction for crimes so enormous, he admitted that in cases of death they should hold good. "When," he says, "some of those who had fallen (*in persecution*,) either of themselves, or at the instigation of others, boldly demanded

and attempted by violence to enjoy the peace promised them by the martyrs and confessors, I wrote twice to the clergy on this subject, and ordered them, that if any should depart out of life, after having received a letter from the martyrs, having previously received their confession, and received the imposition of hands unto penance, they should be sent to the Lord with the peace promised them by the martyrs." (7) This peace, then, not only implied the external communion of the Church whilst living, but a removal of that obligation of penance which remained after confession and absolution, and which prevented the vision of God. St. Cyprian, elsewhere speaking on the same subject, says: "We indeed believe that the merits of the martyrs and works of just men have great force with the Judge, but when the day of judgment shall come, when at the end of time and of the world, the Christian people shall stand before his tribunal." (8) This he says, condemning the facility which caused the entire neglect of penitential satisfaction on the part of the apostates; but not denying the force of the merits of the martyrs in cases where there was a just cause for applying them, as when death summoned sinners to that dread tribunal, before they had done sufficient penance.

In mitigating the severity of canonical penance, the bishops used the power of loosing, which, as that of binding, had been given them in the persons of the Apostles; and in this they imitated the benign indulgence of St. Paul to the penitent Corinthian, pardoning in the person of Christ whatever needed pardon. (9) Their act was directed to the relaxation of the canonical law; but by consequence it removed the debt of temporal punishment, to discharge which the canonical penance was enjoined. This was not a mere disciplinary regulation, intended only to terrify sinners, or to repair scandal; it was truly to appease God and to satisfy his justice. Cyprian, speaking of the penitential exercises to which the sinner should devote himself, says: "The Lord is to be implored, the Lord is to be appeased by our satisfaction." (10) Thus in granting the Indulgence, the bishop freed the sinner from this necessity of satisfaction, pardoning him by divine authority. Sometimes the pardon was only partial, a portion of the penance and satisfaction being remitted; sometimes it was entire, or penary, the whole obligation of canonical penance being taken away. The partial Indulgences were designated according to the length of time abridged, forty days, seven years, or a longer period, as assigned to various sins in the penitential canons.

The remission of sin was not granted by an indulgence, for it was always the fixed principle of the Church that this should be sacramental, and in the form of a sentence in the tribunal of penance. St. Basil had taught that "we must neces-

sarily confess our sins to those to whom the mysteries of God are entrusted;" (11) and the practice of all preceding ages shows that this was a necessary consequence of the power of giving and retaining sins granted by Christ to his apostles. (12) The temporal punishment, which oftentimes remains to be endured after the forgiveness of sin, was alone remitted by an Indulgence, as it took the place of the performance of canonical penance.

The merits of Jesus Christ have always been regarded as the inexhaustible source whence all graces flow, and in virtue whereof all power is exercised. The bishops offered these to divine justice in satisfaction for the debt, from which, in the name of Christ, they released the sinner. Yet a motive for the exercise of the power being drawn from the sufferings of the martyrs, who at an early period interceded to obtain it, the Church deemed it no degradation to the merits of Christ, which she proclaims to be infinite, to offer at the same time, in behalf of her weak members, the sufferings and merits of the saints in conjunction with those of our Redeemer. This was done, not to supply any deficiency in the atonement of Calvary, but as a motive for its application. The merits of the saints take also the character of a partial ransom, deriving its value from the cross. The ardor of their love, their patience in suffering, their intense compunction, have received from divine munificence a reward exceedingly great; but God is not displeased when his Church places before him the severity of their penitential afflictions, and the intenseness of their sufferings for the faith, to supply the deficiencies of their weaker brethren. The stainless Mother, whose very soul a sword of sorrow pierced, may be presented, that her unmerited suffering may plead for our want of courage to endure what our sins deserve: the austerity of the Precursor, sanctified from his mother's womb, may supply our inability to mortify our appetite, as becomes penitents: the labors and sufferings of Paul, "in prisons, in stripes above measure, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness," may be offered in our behalf. We are members of one body, and claim the benefits of the mysterious union, which makes all one in Christ. (13)

[11] In Reg. brev. resp. ad qu. cclxxxviii.

[12] See Theologia Dogmatica, vol. iii. p. 333.

[13] The Tract No. 79 thus explains an Indulgence:—There is one other means of escaping the penalties due to sin in Purgatory, which may briefly be mentioned, viz:—By the grant of Indulgences; these are dispensed on the following theory. Granting that a certain fixed temporal penalty is attached to every act of sin, in such case, it would be conceivable, that, as the multitude of Christians did not discharge their total debt in this life, some extraordinary holy men might more than discharge it. Such are the Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Ascetics, and the like, who have committed few sins, and have undergone extreme labors and sufferings, voluntary and involuntary. The being supposed, the question rises, what becomes of the surplus; and then there seems a fitness that what is not needed for themselves, should avail for the brethren who are still debtors. It is accordingly stored together with Christ's merits, in a kind of treasure-house, to be dispensed according to the need.

[1] Analysis of Barnes on Article 14, p. 198.

[2] Can. xii.

[3] Can. v.

[4] Can. i.

[5] Cap. lxxv.

[6] L. i. ad Mart. ep. i.

(1) Ep. x.

(8) L. de lapsis. "Credimus quidem posse apud judicem plurimum martyrum meritis, et opera justorum."

(9) 2 Cor. ii. 10.

(10) "Dominus grandis est. Dominus nostra satisfactorio a nobis est." L. de lapsis.