

I want to know a little more about it. The Pope says in his letter that the Church of Rome has always believed and taught that dogma of the immaculate conception. Is that correct?"

"Yes, my friend, the Pope says that in his Encyclical; but these last nine hundred years more than one hundred Popes have declared that the Church had never believed it. Even several Popes have forbidden to say 'that the immaculate conception was an article of faith'—and they solemnly permitted to believe and say what we please on that matter."

"If it be so with this new dogma, how can we know that it was not so with the other dogmas of our Church, as the confession, the purgatory," &c., added the good farmer.

"My dear friend, do not allow the devil to shake your faith. We are living in bad days indeed. Let us pray God to enlighten and save us. I would have given much had you never put to me these questions.

My honest parishioner had left me; but his awful questions, (they were really awful, as they are still awful for a priest of Rome,) and the answers I had been forced to give, were sounding in my soul as thunder-claps. There was in my poor trembling heart, as the awful noise of an irresistible storm, which was to destroy all that I had so dearly cherished and respected in my then so dear and venerated Church of Rome. My head was aching. I fell on my knees; but for a time I could not utter a word of prayer: big tears were rolling on my burning cheeks; new light was coming before the eyes of my soul; but I took it for the deceitful temptation of Satan; a voice was speaking to me; it was the voice of my God telling me, "Come out from Babylon! come out from Babylon!" But I took that voice for the voice of Satan; I was trying to silence it. The Lord was then drawing me away from my perishing ways; but I did not know him then; I was struggling against Him to remain in the dark dungeons of error. But God was to be the stronger. In his infinite mercy He was to overpower His unfaithful servant. He was to conquer me, and with me many others.

May all the nations bless and praise Him for His mercies!

Not long after that, in a single day, more than one thousand of my dear countrymen broke with me the chains of the spiritual and abject slavery which had bound us to the feet of the man of sin; and we took Jesus, the eternal Son of God, for our only way, our only light, our only life!

C. CHINIQUY.