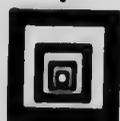


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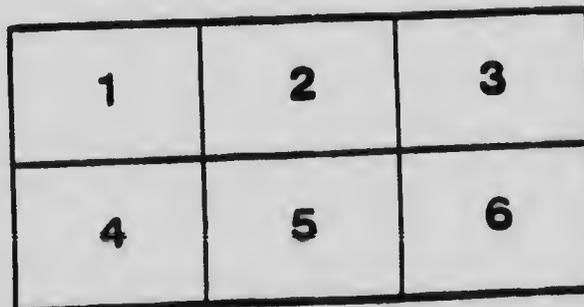
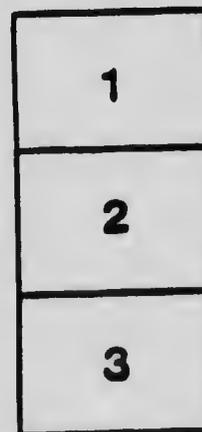
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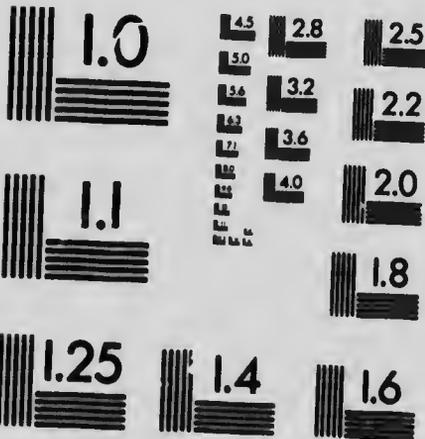
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By
FATHER CHINIQUY
Ex-Roman Catholic Priest

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WHY I LEFT THE CHURCH of ROME

By the late **FATHER CHINIQUY**
Author of "Fifty Years in the Church of Rome."

I WAS born in the Church of Rome in 1809, and I was ordained priest in the year 1833. For twenty-five years I was a priest of that Church, and I tell you frankly that I loved the Church of Rome, and she loved me. I would have shed every drop of my blood for my Church, and would have given a thousand times my life to extend her power and dignity over the continent of America and over the whole world. God had given me some power to speak in French, and my great ambition was to convert the Protestants, and bring them into my Church, because I was told, and I preached, that outside the Church of Rome there was no salvation, and I was sorry to think that those multitudes of Protestants were to be lost. I never missed an opportunity of speaking to a Protestant in Canada in order to prove to him that his Church was not the Church of Christ, and my zeal and success was so great that, during my ministry, I persuaded ninety-three Protestant families to become Roman Catholics. But, thanks be to God, after my conversion, I went back to those very same people with the saving light of the Gospel in my hand, and, with the exception of three, they have all come back to the side of Jesus, where they have found peace.

The Holy Bible Put in my Hand when Young.

My father, who was born in Quebec, had prepared himself for the priesthood, but a few days before he was to be ordained a priest he saw something in the Church of Rome which puzzled him. Filled with indignation, he gave up his position

in the seminary, where he had studied for four years; but he had previously received from the Superior a splendid Bible in Latin and French. He kept that book, and afterwards became a notary. A few years after I was born, we removed to a place where there were no schools. My mother became my first teacher, and the first book in which my dear mother taught me to read was the Bible. When I was eight or nine years old I read the Divine Book with an incredible pleasure, and my heart was much taken up with the beauty of the Word of God. My mother selected the chapters she wished me to read, and the attention I gave to it was such that, many times, I refused to go and play with the boys outside the house in order to enjoy the pleasure I felt in reading the Holy Book. Some chapters I loved more than others, and these I learned by heart. The farmers of the place were all Roman Catholic, and when the roads were bad and they were unable to go to Church on the Sabbath day, they came, out of curiosity, with their families, to my father's house, to hear me recite the chapters I had learned during the week, and I stood on the table in my father's hall for the purpose. Then, when I was tired, my mother, who had a beautiful voice, sang some Roman Catholic hymns in French, after which I would again recite.

I remember that one Sabbath day I had gone to the Church with my mother, and we arrived before the time. A farmer who saw me said, "My little boy, you must come and give us some of the beautiful chapters of the Gospel you gave us last Sabbath in your father's house." A pulpit was made for me by installing me in a buggy, and I recited to quite a multitude of people the beautiful 15th chapter of St. Luke, which, as you know, contains the parable of the prodigal son, where the son, after having given up his dear father, comes back, and with tears of joy is received into the arms of his father. The poor people had never

heard that, and I remember that when I recited it to them the tears rolled down their cheeks. When the bell gave the signal to go to Church, I shall never forget the people saying, "Oh, it is too bad; it would be better to remain here and hear those beautiful things!" for the priest of the parish was one who never preached. He was a Frenchman who had been condemned to death by Robespierre, and had escaped to England, and had gone from England to Canada. The poor people were quite ignorant of the Scriptures, and they were happy to hear that magnificent exposition of the mercies of God.

The Priest Wants to Burn my Bible.

Next day I was playing at the door of our house when I saw the priest coming. The priest had never come to my father's house before; he was not on good terms with him, though I did not know why; my father did not like him. I ran back in, and said, "Papa, here is the priest coming." "Well," my father said, "all right," and he came forward politely and opened the door to the priest, shook his hand, and said "Welcome, sir," and they began to talk. The first minutes of the conversation were very interesting, for the priest was a good talker, though he was not a speaker from the pulpit. I was standing by my dear mother, when suddenly the priest stopped, his eye having caught my Bible, which was on the table, and turning to my father he asked, "Sir, is it true that you and your son read the Bible?" My father said, "Yes, sir, it is true; not only does my dear boy read the Bible, but he learns it by heart, and if you like, Mr. Curate, he will give you a few chapters." "Well," said the priest, "I do not care to hear; I came here for a very different purpose. Do not you know that it is forbidden by the Council of Trent for any Roman Catholic to read the Bible without the permission of the priest?" My mother replied, "I have the permission of the Governor of Quebec, who gave

me the book." Then the priest asked, "Has your boy also permission to read it?" and my father replied, "If it is not bad for me to read it cannot be bad for my boy." The priest then said, "M. Chiniquy, you know better, you have studied theology, and you know that my duty here is a very painful one. *I came here to take away from your hands this book and burn it.*" My father was a quick-tempered Frenchman, and he could not stand that. He rose up as quick as lightning and began to pace the room. I was trembling by the side of my mother, anticipating at every turn that my father would take the priest and throw him through the window. The priest also was trembling, seeing that there was a storm ahead. At the end of four or five minutes my father stopped quickly before the priest, and said, "Is that all you have to say in my house?" The priest said, "Yes, that is all I have to say." Then my father answered, "If that is all you have to say, sir, here is the door by which you came. Please take that door and go away." And the priest thought it advisable to follow this good advice, and he went away at the double quick.

I was so glad that my father had kept my Bible that I ran to his neck and kissed him, and thanked him for his victory over the enemy. The week before I had learned the beautiful history of the battle of David against Goliath, and in order to pay my father with my childish money I gave him that history, telling how David with a little stone had killed the giant. Of course, in my mind, my father was the David, the little man, the priest was the giant, and the Bible was the stone.

But the year after, my father died suddenly, and, not long after, the Bible disappeared from the house. Probably the priest had sent someone to take it away. Now this Bible is the root of everything in the story of my conversion. That is the light which was put into my soul when young, and, thanks be to God, that light has never been

extinguished. It has remained there. All the darkness of Rome and the teachings of Popery have never been able to put that light out, and it is to that dear Bible, by the mercy of God, that I owe to-day the unspeakable joy which I feel at being among the redeemed, amongst those who have received the light and are drinking at the pure fountain of truth.

Roman Catholics and Permission to Read the Bible.

But perhaps you are inclined to say, "Do not the Roman Catholic priests of England allow their people to read the Bible?" Yes, I thank God that it is so; and it is probable they may boast of this privilege. It is a fact that to-day, almost all over the world, the Church of Rome grants permission to read the Bible, and you will find the Bible in the houses of some Roman Catholics. But I will here ask the Roman Catholics, "To whom do you owe that privilege and honour of a Bible in your house? Is it to your Church?" Oh! no, for if your Church could be free to fulfil her own laws you would be sent to gaol; nay, you would be burnt on a scaffold for that Bible. But you owe that privilege to the glorious Protestant British flag which protects you—wherever it floats to the breeze, no Pope, no priest will dare to trouble you for that Bible—they let you possess and read that holy book because they cannot help it. But when we have confessed this we must say the truth. When the priest of Rome, to-day, puts a Bible in the hands of his people, or any priest receives the Bible from his Church, there is a condition. The condition is that though the priest or people may read the Bible, they must swear that they will never interpret a single word according to their conscience, their intelligence, or in their own mind.

When I was ordained a priest of Rome, a grand ceremony was made. I was kneeling before the Bishop, who was covered with gold. It was in the great Cathedral of Quebec, and I shall never forget

the solemnity of the hour. Kneeling, trembling before the great dignitary, whom I took for the ambassador of Christ, he put a splendidly gilded Bible into my hands, and he asked me to make two oaths. The first oath was a good, a Christian, and a godly one. By that oath I promised I would read the Bible. And I remember that my heart was leaping with joy within my breast when I made the oath to read the Bible. But as soon as I had made that oath, the Bishop asked me to make another, which every Roman Catholic priest is bound to make, viz., that I would never interpret a single word of the Bible according to my intelligence, my mind, or my conscience. I swore that I would interpret the Scriptures only according to the unanimous consent of the Holy Fathers. Then, friends, go to the Roman Catholics to-day, and ask them if they have the permission to read the Bible. They will tell you, "Yes, I can read it." But ask, "Have you the permission to interpret it?" They will tell you, "No." The priest says positively to the people, and the Church says positively to the priest, that they cannot interpret a single word of the Bible according to their own intelligence and their own conscience, and that it is a damnable sin to take upon themselves the interpretation of a single word. The priest says in effect to the people, "If you try to interpret the Bible with your own intelligence you are lost. It is a most dangerous book. You may read it, but it is better not to read it, because you cannot understand it. Very few men can understand such a book. See the poor Protestants! They are all divided—Protestants against Protestants, into Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Unitarians and Presbyterians. They are all fighting like wild cats."

What is the result of such teaching? The result is that though both the priests and the people have the Bible in their hands they do not read it. Would you read a book if you were persuaded by what you consider the greatest authority on earth that

the book is dangerous to you, and that you cannot understand a single word by yourself? Would you be such fools as to waste your precious time in reading a book which you were persuaded you could not understand a single line of? Then, my friends, this is the truth about the Church of Rome. They have a great number of Bibles; you will find Bibles on the tables of the priests and of the laymen, but in ten thousand priests there are not two who read the Bible from the beginning to the end and pay any attention to it. In a million of Roman Catholics you will not find a thousand who read the Bible to follow it. They read a few pages here and there; that is all. In the Church of Rome that book is a sealed book, but it was not so with me. I had found it precious to my heart when I was a little boy, and when I became a priest of Rome I read it to make me a strong man, and to make me able to argue against your ministers.

I Wished to Confound the Protestant Ministers.

My great object was to confound the Protestant ministers of America. I got a copy of the "Holy Fathers," and I studied it day and night with the Holy Scriptures, in order to prepare myself for the great battle I wanted to fight. It was my intention to prove, in a public discussion, that Protestant ministers were nothing but a band of deceivers. Many a time I began my study with the first hours of the night and was so much interested in it, that the dawn of the next day found me still with the Holy Book before my eyes. I compared the teachings of the Church of Rome with the teachings of the Holy Scriptures with such attention and pleasure that the hours passed so quickly that I did not notice their flight. I made this study in order to strengthen my faith in the Church of Rome; but, blessed be God, every time I read the Bible there was a mysterious voice which said to me, "Do not you see that in the Church of Rome you do not follow the teachings of the Word of God, but only the lying traditions of men?"

My God Gives Me the Light, but I Refuse it.

In the silent hours of the night, when I heard that voice, I wept and cried, but it was repeated with the strength of thunder in a storm. I wanted to live and die in the Holy Roman Catholic Church, and I prayed to God to silence the voice, but I heard it yet still louder. Once, after I had preached, according to the teachings of my Church, that there was a Purgatory, during the night the voice came like the voice of thunder: "Chiniquy, do not you see that you preached a lie this morning when you said to the people that they were to be purified after their death in Purgatory, when in the Scripture you see that it is only through the blood of the Lamb shed on the Cross that the souls of men can be saved?" Then the voice said to me, "Come out from that Church." Then I struggled, and I wept, and I cried. I cannot relate all the battles I fought against my God, when He came as a warrior to conquer me. When I was reading His word He was trying to break my fetters, but I would not have my fetters broken. He came to me with His saving light, but I would not have His saving light. I have no bad feeling against the priests of Rome. Some of you may think I have. You are mistaken. Sometimes I weep for them because I know that the poor men—just as I did—are fighting against the Lord, and that they are miserable as I was miserable then. If I relate to you one of the battles of which I speak you will understand what it is to be a priest of Rome, and you will pray for them.

My Sermon on the Virgin Mary.

In Montreal there is a splendid cathedral, which is capable of holding 15,000 people. I used to preach there very often. One day the Bishop asked me to speak on the Virgin Mary, and I was very glad to do so. On the occasion of a great festivity I preached in the cathedral, before the bishops, the doctrine of Roman Catholicism regarding the Virgin Mary. I said to those people what I thought to

be true then, and what the priests do believe and preach everywhere:—

“My dear friends, when a man has rebelled against his king, when he has committed a great crime against his emperor, does he come himself to speak to him? If he has a favour to ask from his king, dare he under the circumstances appear himself in his presence? No; the king would rebuke him, and would punish him. Then, when a man has rebelled, if he regrets his action, and if he wants any favour from his king, what does he do? Instead of going himself he selects one of the friends of the king, some one of his officers, sometimes the sister or the mother of the king, and then he puts his petition into their hands, and they go and speak in favour of the guilty man. They ask his pardon, they appease his wrath, and very often the king will grant to these people the favour which he would refuse to the guilty man. “Then,” I said, “we are all sinners; we have all offended the great and mighty King, the King of kings. We have raised rebellious colours against Him. We have trampled His orders under our feet, and surely He is angry against us. What can we do to-day? Shall we go ourselves with our hands filled with our iniquities? No! But, thanks be to God, we have Mary the mother of Jesus our King, at His right hand, and as a dutiful son never refuses any favour to a beloved mother, so Jesus will never refuse any favour to Mary. He has never refused any petition which she has presented to Him when He was on earth. He has never rebuked His mother in any way. Where is the son who would refuse a favour to his dear mother? Where is the son who would break the heart of a loving mother, when he could rejoice her by granting her what she wants? Then I say Jesus, the King of kings, is not only the Son of God, but He is the Son of Mary, and loves His mother. And as He has never refused any favour to Mary when He was on earth, He will never refuse her any favour to-day. Then what must we do? Oh! we cannot present ourselves before the great King, covered as we are with iniquity. Let us present our petitions to His holy mother; she will go to the feet of Jesus herself, Jesus her God and her Son,, and she will surely receive the favours which she will ask; she will ask our pardon and will obtain it. She will ask a place in the Kingdom of Christ, and you will have it. She will ask from Jesus to forget your iniquities, to grant you the true repentance, and He will give you anything which His mother may ask Him.”

My hearers were so happy at the idea of having such an advocate at the feet of Jesus interceding for them day and night that they all burst into tears, and were beside themselves with joy that

Mary was to ask and obtain their pardon. I thought at the time that was not only the religion of Christ, but it was the religion of common sense, and that nothing could be said against it. After the address the Bishop came to me and blessed me, and thanked me, saying that the sermon would do great good in Montreal.

My Roman Catholic Faith Shaken.

I spent that night in the palace of the Bishop, and I shall never forget that solemn hour. I went on my knees and took my Bible, and my heart was full of joy on account of the good address I had given in the morning. I read from Matthew xii, 46, the following words: "While He yet talked to the people, behold, His mother and His brethren stood without, desiring to speak with Him. Then said one unto Him, Behold Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without desiring to speak to Thee. But He answered and said to him that told Him, Who is My Mother, and who are My brethren? And He stretched forth His hand towards His disciples and said, Behold My mother and My brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in Heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother." When I had read these words there was a voice speaking to me more terrible than the voice of the loud thunder, saying, "Chiniquay, you preached a lie this morning when you said that Mary had always received the favours which she had asked from Jesus. Do not you see that here Jesus is rebuking His mother? Do not you see that Mary comes to ask a favour, that is to see her son, during whose absence she has been lonesome, and who had left her house during many months to preach the Gospel? When Mary got to the place where Jesus was preaching, the place was so crammed that she could not enter it. What will she do? She raises her voice and requests Him to come and see her; but while Jesus hears the voice of His mother, and with His divine eyes sees her, does

He grant her petition? No. He shuts His ears to her voice and hardens His heart against her prayer. It is a public rebuke, and she feels it keenly. The people are astonished. They are puzzled, almost scandalised. They turn to Christ, and they say to Him, 'Why don't you come and speak to your mother?' What does Jesus say? He gives no answer except this extraordinary one: 'Who is My mother, and who are My brethren?' and, looking upon His disciples, He says, 'Behold My mother, My brethren, and My sisters.' As for Mary, she is left alone, and publicly rebuked." And then the voice spoke to me again with the power of thunder, telling me to read again in Saint Mark. You will find that Mark says that Jesus has rebuked His mother. Read in Luke. Luke says that Jesus rebuked His mother, He would not grant the petition; and then the voice spoke to me with terrible power, telling me that Jesus, so long as He was a little boy, obeyed His father Joseph and His mother; but as soon as Jesus presented Himself before the world as the Son of God, as the Saviour of the world, as the great Light of humanity, then Mary had to disappear, just as when the hours of the night are finished the moon must disappear.

The moon is beautiful, but let the bright sun appear on your horizon and you will see no moon, because her splendour will be outshone by the grand sun which God has given to throw light and life upon the whole world. In the same way it is to Jesus alone that the eyes of the world must be turned to receive light and life. Then, my friends, the voice spoke to me all the night: "Chiniquy, Chiniquy, you have said a lie this morning, and you were preaching a lot of fables and nonsense; and you preach against the Scriptures when you say that Mary has the power to grant any favour from Jesus in any way." I prayed and wept, and it was a sleepless night with me; it was a long and a darksome night. Next day I felt like a dying

man. I went to say my Mass, but tears were running on my cheeks. My heart was broken because I was shaken. I was shaken like a ship which is suddenly taken on the ocean by a storm. I was tossed here and there, and I found there was no power left in me.

My Meeting with the Bishop.

After I had said my Mass I went to table with the Bishop Prince, the coadjutor, who had invited me to breakfast. He said to me, "M. Chiniquy, what does this mean? You look like a man who has spent the night in tears. Your eyes are reddened; your face is furrowed. What is the matter with you?" I said, "My lord, if you find on my face the tears of desolation, you are correct. I am desolate above measure; my heart is sad." "What is the matter?" he said. "Oh! I cannot say that here," I said. "Will you please give me one hour in your room alone? I will tell you a mystery which will puzzle you." After breakfast I went with him and said, "My lord, I will tell you why my tears are rolling down my cheeks this morning as they were last night. Yesterday you paid me great compliments because of the address I gave to prove that Jesus had always granted the petitions of His mother; but, my lord, last night I have heard another voice stronger than yours, and my desolation is that I am tempted to believe that the voice I have heard is the voice of God. That voice has told me that we Roman Catholic priests and bishops preach a blasphemous falsehood every time that we say to the people that Mary has always the power to receive from the hands of Jesus Christ the favours which she asks. This is a lie, my lord—this, I fear, a diabolical and damning error."

The Bishop then said, "M. Chiniquy, what do you mean? Are you a Protestant?" "No," I said, "I am not a Protestant." Many times I had been called a Protestant because I was so fond of the Bible. "But I tell you in your face that I

sincerely fear that yesterday I preached a lie, and that you, my lord, will preach one also the next time you say that we must invoke Mary, under the pretext that Jesus has never refused any favour to His mother. This is false." The Bishop again said, "M. Chiniquy, you go too far." "No, my lord," I said, "it is of no use to talk. Here is the Gospel; read it." And I put the Gospel in the hands of the Bishop, and he read with his own eyes what I have read you, and my impression is that he read those words for the first time. The poor man was so much surprised that he remained mute and trembling. Finally he asked, "What does that mean?" "Well," I said, "this is the Gospel, and here you see that Mary has come to ask from Jesus Christ a favour, and He has not only rebuked her, but has refused to consider her as His mother. He has publicly rebuked her, and said He would not recognise her as His mother that we might know that Mary is the mother of Jesus as man, and not as God." The Bishop was beside himself. He could not answer me. I then asked to be allowed to put him a few questions.

I said, "My lord, who has saved you and saved me upon the Cross?" He answered, "Jesus Christ."

"And who paid your debts and mine by shedding His blood; was it Mary or Jesus?" He said, "Jesus Christ."

"Now my lord, when Jesus and Mary were on earth, who loved the sinner more; was it Mary or Jesus?" And again he answered that it was Jesus.

"Did any sinner come to Mary on earth to be saved?" "No."

"Do you remember that any sinner has gone to Jesus to be saved?" "Yes, many."

"Have they been rebuked?" "Never."

"Do you remember that Jesus has said sometime, to sinners, 'Come to Mary and she will save you?'" "No," he said.

"Do you remember that Jesus has said to the poor sinners, 'Come unto Me?'" "Yes, He has said it."

"Has He ever retracte those words?" "No!"

"And who was it, then, the more powerful to save sinners?" I asked. "Oh! it was Jesus."

"Now, my lord, since Jesus and Mary are now in Heaven, can you show me in the Scripture that Jesus has lost anything of His desire and power to save sinners, and that what Jesus has lost has been gained by Mary?" And the Bishop answered, "No."

"Then, my lord," I asked, "why do we not go to Him and Him alone? Why do we invite poor sinners to come to Mary, when, by your own confession, she is nothing compared with Jesus in power, in mercy, in love, and in compassion for the sinner?" Then the poor Bishop was as a man who is condemned to death. He trembled before me, and as he could not answer me he pleaded business, and left me. His business was that he could not answer me.

I was persuaded, but I was not converted. There were still many links by which I was still tied to the feet of the Pope. There were other battles to be fought before I could break the chains which bound me to the idols of Rome. I should draw your tears if I told you the battles I have fought against myself and against God. One day I told myself that I was an idolater every time I made a god with a wafer. Roman Catholicism has a Christian name, but it is old paganism coming under a new name. It is true they worship Christ in the Church of Rome. They invoke the name of Christ. They build splendid churches to that Christ, and are exceedingly devoted to their Christ. But, remember, Jesus says that in the latter day several kinds of Christ will come to be worshipped, and the Christ of the Church of Rome is an idol. It is a Christ whom they make every day with a wafer.

It is an incredible thing; some may be tempted to say that this is against charity. Protestants, you have forgotten in these days that Roman Catholicism is idolatry. It comes to you with so much of the appearance of Christianity that you have forgotten that it is written in your own books that the Mass is an idolatrous thing, and that the wafer is nothing but an idol. But in those days, though I was troubled, I had not lost my zeal.

I Go to Form a Colony with the French.

The bishops had given me great power and authority, and the Pope had raised me above many others, and I had the hope with others that little by little we might reform the Church in many things. In 1851 I went to the State of Illinois, at the request of the bishops, to found a French Colony. I took with me about 75,000 French Canadians, and settled on the magnificent prairies of Illinois, to take possession of the country in the name of the Church of Rome. Chicago, now a magnificent city of more than half a million of men, was then a very small town. After I had begun my great work of colonisation my mind received many lights. I was a rich man, and I bought many Bibles and gave one to almost every family. The Bishop was very angry at me for giving away these Bibles, but I did not care. I had no idea of giving up the Church of Rome, but I wanted to guide my people as well as I could in the way in which Christ wanted me to lead them.

The Bishop Dismissed by the Pope.

Now the Bishop of Chicago did a thing at that time which we Frenchmen could not tolerate. It was a great crime, and I wrote to the Pope and him dismissed. Another Bishop was sent in his place, who deputed his Grand Vicar to make his peace with us.

The Grand Vicar said to me, "M. Chiniquy, we are very glad that you have got the former Bishop dismissed, for he was a bad man; but it is suspected in many places that you are no more in the Church of Rome. It is suspected in England that you are a heretic and a Protestant. Will not you give us a document by which we can prove to all the world that you and your people are still good Roman Catholics?" I said, "I have no objection," and he rejoined, "It is the desire of the Bishop whom the Pope has sent to have such a document from you."

I then took a piece of paper, and it seemed to me that this was a golden opportunity to silence the voice which was speaking to me day and night and troubling my faith. I wanted to persuade myself by this means that in the Church of Rome we were really following the Word of God, and not the lying traditions of men. I wrote down these very words: "My lord, we French Canadian of the colony of Illinois want to live in the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church, out of which there is no salvation, and to show this to your lordship we promise to obey your authority according to the Word of God, as we find it in the Gospel of Christ." I signed that and offered it to my people to sign, and they did. I then gave it to the Grand Vicar, and asked him what he thought of it. He said, "It is just what we want." I said, "I am very glad, but I am afraid the Bishop will not accept this submission." "Why not?" "Because you see, I have put here a little condition. I have said here, 'We submit ourselves to your authority, but according to the Word of God, as we find it in the Gospel of Christ.'" "Well," said the Grand Vicar, "is not that good?" "Yes," I said, "it is very good; but I fear it is too good for the Pope and the bishops." "Well," said he, "what do you mean?" "My dear sir," I said, "this is a thing I have never revealed to any man. God only knows the troubles which have been in my mind for many years. There is not a living priest who has studied the Scriptures and the Holy Fathers more than I have done, in order to strengthen my faith in the Church of Rome; but the more I studied, the more there was a voice constantly day and night troubling me, and saying, 'Do not you see that in the Church of Rome you do not follow the Word of God, but the lying traditions of men?' My fear is that the Church of Rome has rejected the great saving truth of the Gospel, and put in its place the lying traditions of men." The Grand Vicar, however, assured me that the Bishop would accept it, and all would be right.

My Submission to the Other Bishop and my blindness.

To my great surprise, when the Bishop had read the submission he found it right, and he put his arms around me and pressed me to his bosom, and with tears of joy said, "Oh! I am so glad that you have made your submission, because we were in fear that you and your people would turn Protestants." My friends, to show you my blindness, I must confess, to my shame, that I was glad to have made my peace with that man when I was not in peace with my God. The Bishop gave me a letter of peace, by which he declared that I was one of his best priests, and I went back to my countrymen with the determination to remain there. But my God looked down upon me in His mercy, and He was to break that peace which was peace with man and not peace with Him. The Bishop after my departure ran to the telegraph office, and he telegraphed my submission to the other bishops, and asked them what they thought of it. They unanimously answered him the very same day: "Do not you see that Chiniquy is a disguised Protestant, and he has made a Protestant of you? It is not to you that he makes submission; he makes his submission to the Word of God, and if we do not destroy that submission you are a Protestant yourself."

My Last Interview With the Bishop

Ten days after I received a letter from the Bishop, and when I went to him he asked me if I had the letter of peace he gave me the other day. I produced it, and when he saw it was the letter of peace he wanted, he ran to his stove and threw it into the fire. I was astonished; but I ran to the fire myself to save my letter, but it was too late. It was destroyed. Then I turned to the Bishop, and I said, "How dare you, my lord, take from my hand a document which is my property, and destroy it without my permission?" He replied, "M. Chiniquy, I am your superior, and I have no

account to give you." "You are indeed, my lord, my superior, and I am nothing but a poor priest, but there is a great God who is as much above you as above me, and that God has granted me rights which I will never give up to please any man; in the presence of that God and in the presence of the President of the College of Jesuits [who was there] I protest against your iniquity." "Well," he said, "do you come here to give me a lecture?" I replied, "No, my lord; but I want to know if you brought me here to insult me?" He said, "M. Chiniquy, I brought you here because you deceived me. You gave me a document which you know very well was not an act of submission." Then the voice within me said very strongly, "Do not you see that in the Church of Rome you do not follow the Word of God, but the lying traditions of men?" And thanks be to God that I did not silence the voice, but I prayed to God to grant it to me to follow His Holy Word. Then I said to the Bishop, "My lord, how can you say that I deceived you the other day? I gave you a document which was written in perfect English. You read it twice and understood it well. Then, if you have been deceived, you deceived yourself, and you cannot accuse me of the deception." The Bishop said he could not accept such a submission, and told me I must make another submission from which the words "according to the Word of God" should be erased. Then I answered, "My lord, you distress me. If I take away from my submission 'the Word of God,' on what basis will my faith stand?" He replied, "M. Chiniquy, I am not here to have a discussion with you. I am your superior; you are my inferior; you must obey me, and give me another submission." "Tell me," I said, "what act of submission you require from me." He said, "You must begin by taking away these little words, 'according to the Word of God as we find it in the Gospel of Christ,' and say simply that you promise to obey my authority without any condition, and that you will promise to

do whatever I tell you." Then I got on to my feet, and I said, "My lord, what you require of me is not an act of submission, but an act of adoration, and I refuse it to you." "Then," said he, "if you cannot give me that act of submission you cannot be any longer a Roman Catholic priest."

I Leave the Church of Rome! My Agony.

I raised my hands to God, and said, "May Almighty God be for ever blessed," and I took my hat and left the Bishop. I went to the hotel where I had engaged a room, and locked the door behind me. I fell on my knees to examine what I had done in the presence of God. Then I saw for the first time clearly that the Church of Rome could not be the Church of Christ. I had learned the terrible truth at last, not from the lips of the Protestants, not from her enemies, but from the lips of the Church of Rome herself, that I could not remain in the Church of Rome except by giving up the Word of God in a formal document as the fundamental stone of my submission to the authority of my Church. Then I saw that I had done well to give up the Church of Rome. But oh! my friends, what a dark cloud came upon me! In my darkness I cried out, "My God, my God, where is Thy Church? Where must I go to be saved? Oh! God of my salvation, where is Thy saving light? Oh! dear Jesus, why is it that my soul is surrounded with such a dark cloud?" With tears I cried to God to show me the way, where to go to be saved; but, for a time, no answer was vouchsafed. I had given up the Church of Rome; I had given up my position, my honour, my brothers and my sisters, everything that was dear to me! I saw that the Pope, the bishops, and the priests would attack me in the Press, in the pulpit, and in their terrible confessional, where they strike a man in such a way that he does not know from whence the blow is coming. I saw that they would take away my honour and my name, and perhaps my life. I saw that war to the death was begun between the Church

of Rome and me, and I looked to see if any friends had been left me to help me to fight the battle, but not a single friend remained. I saw that even my dearest friends were bound to curse me, and look upon me as an infamous traitor. I saw that my people would reject me, that my beloved country, where I had so many friends, would curse me, and that I had become an object of horror in the world.

Then I tried to remember if I had not some friends amongst the Protestants; but as I had spoken and written against the Protestants all my life I had not a single friend there. I saw that I was left all alone to fight the battle against Rome. It was too much, and in that terrible hour, if God had not wrought a miracle, I should have become a corpse. Life became to me such a burden that I felt I could not carry it any longer. My mind was troubled, and it seemed to me impossible to go out from that room into the cold world, where I should not find a hand to shake my hand, or a single smiling face to look upon me. It seemed impossible for me to go out from that room into the cold world, where I should hear the cursing of the millions, and where, whether I looked to the east or to the west, or to the south or to the north, I should see only those who would tell me I was an infamous traitor.

It seemed that God was far away, but He was very near. Suddenly the thought entered my mind, "You have with you your Gospel, read it, and you will find the light." On my knees, and with a trembling hand, I opened the book: not I, but my God opened it, for my eyes fell on 1st Cor. vii. 23—the French is beautiful—" *Vous avez été achetés par prix: ne devenez point esclaves des hommes.*" ("Ye are bought with a price: be not ye the servants of men.") With these words the light came to me, and for the first time I saw the great mystery of salvation as much as a man can see it, and I said to myself, "Jesus has bought me: then, if Jesus has bought me, He has saved me, and I am saved! Jesus is my God, all the works of God are perfect!

I am, then, perfectly saved—Jesus could not save me by half. But what is the price paid?" And the answer came quick as lightning: "The blood of the Lamb shed on the Cross: the life of Jesus given on Calvary hath saved me!" and with cries and tears of joy I said to myself, "Oh! I am saved in the blood of the Lamb; I am saved by the death of Jesus." And these words were so sweet to me that I felt unspeakable joy, as if the fountains of life were opened and floods of new light were flowing in upon my soul. With joy unspeakable I said to myself, "I am not saved, as I thought, by going to Mary; I am not saved by purgatory, or by indulgencies, confessions, and penances. I am saved by Jesus alone!" and all the false doctrines of Rome went away from my mind as falls a tower which is struck at the base.

But suddenly that light went out. Joy went away, and a dark cloud came again upon me. In that hour of horrible darkness I saw this very strange vision. Before the eyes of my trembling soul there arose a mountain, composed not of stone and sand, but of my sin. I saw all my sins in the mountain, from the first to the last, and was almost struck with the terrors of death when I saw this mountain moving on towards me. I tried to escape, but there was no escape; the mountain came rolling down. With a cry which was heard throughout the hotel, and attracted the attention of all the people there, I cried, "My God, I am lost, my sins have destroyed me!" I could not move under the weight of that mountain. It seemed that God would not hear my prayers any longer. He could not see my tears nor hear my voice because the mountain was between Him and me; it seemed that God had nothing to do but to open the gates of hell and throw me into that fire which He has prepared for His enemies. But I struggled and cried again, "Oh, my God, have mercy upon me!"

Then a strange thing happened to me. A beautiful light was seen in the midst of that cloud; and

in the midst of that light—I could not be mistaken—there appeared the personal Jesus. Before the eyes of my soul I saw Him. He was covered with the blood from His wounds: He had on His head a crown of thorns: a Cross lay heavy on His bleeding shoulders, and He was looking to me so kindly when coming towards me! When He was very near, He said, “My friend, I have seen thy tears, I have heard thy cries: I come to bring thee salvation as a gift.” Salvation is a gift! “I have saved thee on the Cross, I come to offer thee eternal life as a gift; will you give Me thy heart? will you take My word for the only lamp to thy feet, the only light to thy soul?” I answered—more with my tears than with my lips—“Dear Jesus, speak, oh! speak again, Thy words are so sweet to my soul! But I am lost, my sins are destroying me! Do not You see that mountain which is crushing me down? Can’t You remove it?”

And I saw, with the eyes of my soul, His mighty hand stretched out: He touched the mountain, and it rolled into the deep waters of the sea, where it disappeared! I then felt a shower!—yes, it was a shower, indeed—the blood of the Lamb was flowing on my poor guilty soul! I then felt such a joy, such a peace, that the angels of God could not be more happy than I was. With a loud cry of joy, I said, “Oh! dear Jesus, I feel it, I know it, Thou hast saved me! Oh! Gift of God, I accept Thee! take my heart and keep it for ever as Thine! Gift of God, adorable Jesus, I accept Thee—yes, I will love Thee to-day, to-morrow, and for ever! Gift of God, abide in me to make me pure and strong, abide in me to be my way, my light, and my life: grant me to abide in Thee now and for every! But, dear Jesus, do not save me alone, save my people, grant me to show them the gift also! Oh! that they may accept the gift, and feel rich and happy as I am now!”

It was thus I found the gift; it was thus that I found the light and the great mystery of our salva-

tion, which is so simple and so beautiful, so sublime and so grand. I had opened the hands of my soul and accepted the gift. I was rich in the gift. I felt I was saved in the gift. I was sure, as I am sure of it to-day, that Jesus could not come to deceive me. Salvation, my friends, is a gift; you have nothing to do but to accept it, love it, and love the Giver. I pressed my Gospel to my lips, I bathed it with tears of joy, and swore I would never preach anything but Jesus.

I arrived in the midst of my colony on a Sabbath morning. The whole people were exceedingly excited, and ran towards me, and asked what news. When they were gathered in the immense Church which the Roman Catholics have burned since, I presented to them the *Gift*. I thought at first they would turn me out. I showed to them what God had presented to me, His Son Jesus as a gift—and, through Jesus, He had sent me the pardon of my sins, and life eternal as a gift. Then, not knowing whether they would receive the gift or not, I said to them, "It is time for me to go away from you, my friends. I have left the Church of Rome for ever. I have taken the gift of Christ, but I respect you too much to impose myself on you; if you think it is better for you to continue to be in the Church of Rome; if you think it is better for you to follow the Pope than to follow Christ, and to invoke the name of Mary than the name of Jesus in order to be saved, tell it to me by rising up." To my exceeding great surprise the whole multitude remained in their seats, filling the Church with their sobs and their tears. I thought some of them would tell me to go, but not one did so. And as I watched I saw a change come over them—a marvellous change, which cannot be explained by natural ways—and I said to them, with a cry of joy, "The mighty God who saved me yesterday can save you to-day. With me you will cross the Red Sea and go into the Promised Land. With me you will accept the great gift—you will be happy and rich in the gift. I will

Why I left the Church of Rome

put to you the same questions in another shape. If you think it is better for you to follow Christ than the Pope, to invoke the name of Jesus alone than the name of Mary; that it is better to put your trust, during your life, only in the blood of the Lamb shed on the Cross for you than in the fabulous purgatory of Rome, after your death to be saved; and if you think that it is better for you to have me to preach to you the pure Gospel of Christ than to have a priest to preach to you the doctrines of Rome, tell it to me by rising up—I am your man! rise up!"

And all, without a single exception, rose to their feet and, with tears of joy, asked me to remain with them!

The gift, the great, the unspeakable gift had, for the first time, come before their eyes in its beauty; they had found it precious, they had accepted it; and no words can tell you the joy of that multitude. Like myself, they felt rich and happy in the gift.

The names of one thousand souls, I believe, were written in the Book of Life that day. Six months later we were two thousand converts; a year after we were about four thousand!; and now we are nearly twenty-five thousand who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.

The news spread quick as lightning all over America—and even in France and England—that Chiniquy, the best known priest of Canada, had left the Church of Rome at the head of a noble band of men. And wherever it was said, the name of Jesus was blessed, and I hope you will bless the merciful and adorable Saviour to-day with me, when it is my privilege to tell you what He has done for my soul.

Pray for the Roman Catholics of England and everywhere, that they may all receive with you the unspeakable Gift; love and glorify the Gift during the few days of the pilgrimage and for all eternity.

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