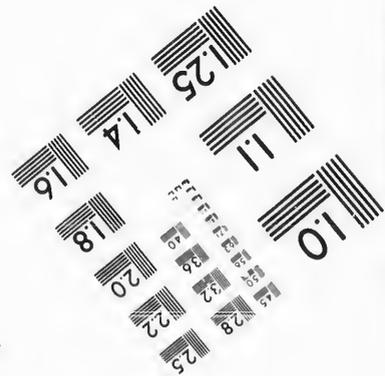
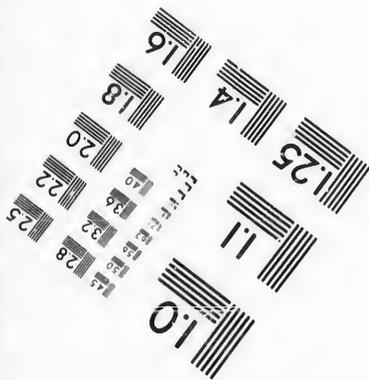
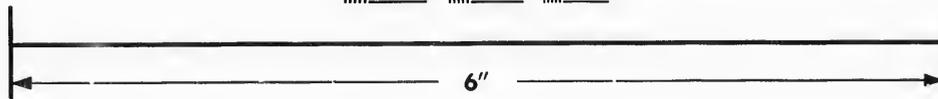
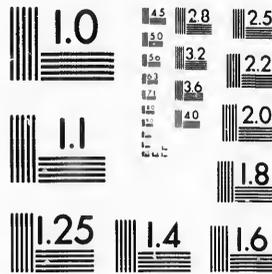


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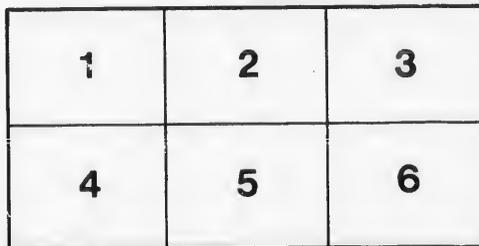
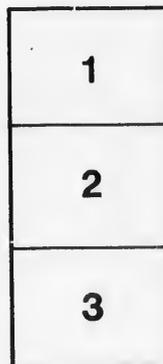
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FRANÇOIS DEPIN.

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A NARRATIVE

OF THE

LIFE AND EXPERIENCE

OF

FRANÇOIS PEPIN,

WHO WAS FOR

MORE THAN 40 YEARS A MEMBER OF THE PAPAL CHURCH ;

EMBRACING AN ACCOUNT OF HIS

CONVERSION, TRIALS, & PERSECUTIONS,

IN TURNING TO

THE PURE RELIGION OF THE BIBLE.

ADDRESSED PARTICULARLY TO HIS BRETHREN OF THE ROMISH CHURCH.

Oh magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.
I sought the Lord and he heard me, and delivered me from all my
fears.—Psalm xxxiv. 3, 4.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

BY REV. GEO. TAYLOR,

Of the Michigan Annual Conference of the M. E. C.

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1854.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN complying with the request of Mr. Pepin to write an "introduction" for the following narrative, I would take the liberty to say I have twice declined the honor. Not, however, from an unwillingness to contribute a trifling encouragement to one who, I have reason to believe, desires, above all things, to go good and to glorify God, but for the two following reasons: First, I have desired that some more competent hand than mine should aid him in introducing his book to the world; and, secondly, from the intimate and conspicuous relation I am made to sustain to the narrative, and from the deep interest I have manifested and still cherish for the French enterprize, I have feared to trust myself, lest that, by a display

of seeming egotism, I might excite the reproaches of the public, which might, consequently, detract from the value of the work. Yet, with my professed love to him, I could not resist a third application. I trust therefore that the reader will exercise the indulgence which the circumstance may seem to require.

In the first place, the reader is informed that the work purports to be a narrative of the past life and experience of a Roman Catholic, including an account of his parentage, birth, and education, with numerous incidents reflecting upon the doctrines and usages of the Roman Catholic Church; and embracing also an account of his conversion to God, and the peculiar trials through which he was called to pass, in turning away from the superstitions of the Church of Rome to the pure religion of the Bible. It is due Mr. Pepin that the world should know that this narrative is not an arrangement of conjured up fabrications, prepared for the purpose of composing this volume; for there are many witnesses to the fact that a majority of the incidents here related as facts were communicated to his pastor, and to the church,

during the first year succeeding his conversion. His Honor, Judge WILKINS, whose name is presented by the author, as having been an instrument in the hands of God, in aiding him in the work of reformation, will bear witness that, again and again, he recommended to his pastor that memoranda be kept of the incidents related, and of those important parts of his experience, which moved the sympathy of the church in his behalf, and gave us confidence in his sincerity.

Another fact to which I would call the attention of the reader is, that upon the very face of this narrative is the indisputable evidence that no sinister motives prompted him to the work of personal reform. It *is true* that reports were circulated in the city, from some source, that he had been hired at a price to turn away from the Roman Church; but his whole life and history support his declaration "that he grew sick of, and disgusted with their superstitions and delusions," and when he went out from them he had not the most distant idea of becoming a Protestant; but, like the patriarch Abraham, "went out not knowing whither he went."

The reader will also be pleased to see the evidence that no *sectarian* scheme was constructed to lead him among any particular people; but that being first enlightened by the Word of God, without human instruction, he endeavored to obey the Word, and follow its counsels, until evidently led by the providence—yea, surely, by the Holy Spirit—into the sanctuary of the Most High, where the Spirit of the Lord fell upon him with Pentecostal power. The circumstances reported as connected with, and following his conversion, (as matters of religious experience) are as nearly perfectly correct as it is possible to record such proceedings, as observers of the same. The circumstance of his refusing to draw the brick for a “devil’s church,” was related at the German M. E. Church, in my presence, at a service of “love feast,” when by an address in his broken English, to Mr. W. W. Howland, he acknowledged the wickedness of the act, and with a heart overflowing with gratitude, he rejoiced in the change which had come over him. It was an event which will be long remembered by all present on that occasion.

It is with no small degree of pleasure that I give

my testimony, also, to the circumstances connected with the revival which followed his conversion; of the disclosures made by Romanists concerning the treatment of their priests and burning of bibles. The organizing the French Class and Church, were as purely providential as any other part of the proceedings; for negotiations were immediately entered into to procure a missionary who could preach to them the pure Gospel in their own tongue.

As the writer has left the present condition of the French cause unnoticed, I would take the liberty to inform the reader that, under the pious and untiring labors of Rév. T. Carter, the work has been one of gentle but certain progress. A neat and very commodious house of worship has been built in Detroit for their service, on Rivard-street, near the corner of Crogan-street, where they now worship God "under their own vine and fig tree," and without molestation. Many thanks are due to a generous christian public, which, laying aside all sectarian considerations, cheerfully and bountifully concentrated their christian sympathies and aid in behalf of the French people, and their church now stands as a monument of their liberality.

I would take the liberty respectfully to refer to friends abroad, in Buffalo, Cleveland, New York, Boston, Baltimore, Washington, Pittsburg, Chicago, Newark, Brooklyn, and other places, who strengthened the hands and encouraged the heart of our beloved brother Carter by their donations, and who will learn with pleasure that the house is completed, souls have already been converted to God there, and some of those who had forsaken their beads and their penances, to serve God in a scriptural way, have, under the watchful care of our missionary, taken their departure to the world of blessedness, in the full hopes and triumphs of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. May God crown his continued labors with increased success! Mr. Pepin is also industriously engaged in spreading Bibles and preaching to the French, both up and down the Detroit River, and at times on both sides. Many have been led through his means to read the Bible for themselves.

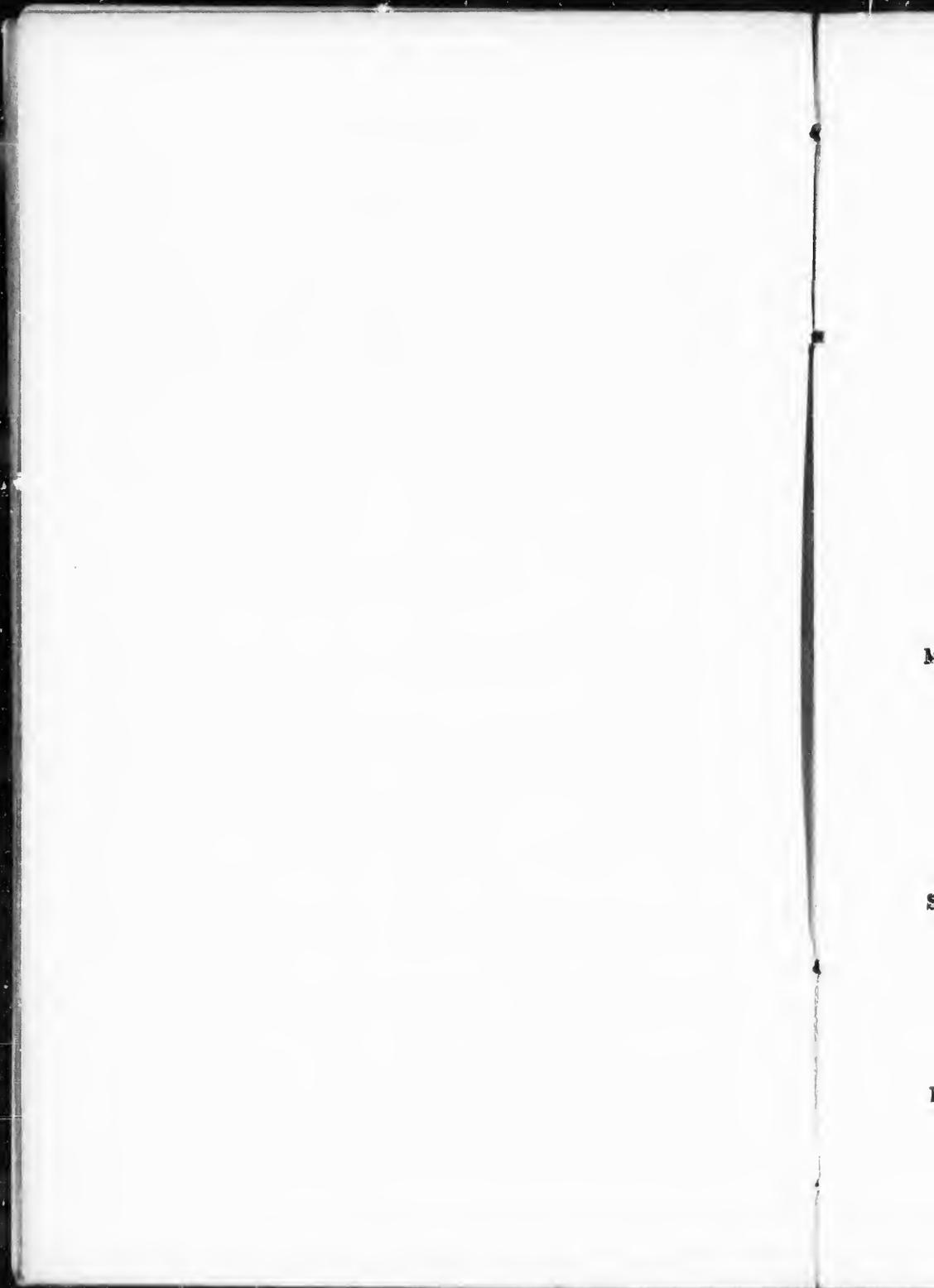
We make no apology for the work on the subject of its lack of embellishment. Mr. Pepin is a plain man, and though he speaks his native tongue with great facility, he speaks English but very imperfectly; in view of which the relations and state-

ments are presented in language of the utmost simplicity.

Lastly, let me bespeak for him and the French cause the earnest and continued prayers of a christian public, and God will crown the work with still greater success, and the people saved, will welcome us into everlasting habitations.

G. TAYLOR.

Romeo, May, 1854.



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NARRATIVE
OF THE
LIFE OF FRANÇOIS PEPIN.

CHAPTER I.

My birth-place.—My parents.—My early religious training.—My early impressions and veneration for the Roman Catholic Church.—Early prejudices against Protestantism.—A devil's church.—My preparation for First Communion.—The severity of the priests.—My head shaved.—My first thoughts upon Transubstantiation.

In presenting a narrative of my life and experience, I would inform the reader that I was born in Charlesburg, Quebec, Lower Canada, and here my father, Pierre Pepin, lived, for eighty-four years.

My parents were members of the Roman Catholic Church from their infancy, and educated their children according to its strictest usages. Particular pains were taken, in the days of my childhood, to engraft upon my mind and heart an exalted veneration for the priests, and for all the services and duties of religion, the result of which was an early bending of my inclinations to all their sacred obligations.

When only ten years old, I was taught by the priests the Latin Services, called "Les Prières de la

Masse," the prayers of the Mass, and for several years, constantly assisted in singing them. Being thus in frequent association with them, witnessing their solemn and earnest devotions, and with them chanting the solemn requiem year after year, and hearing them constantly represent the Protestant religion as the devil's religion, I soon became an uncharitable and unfeeling bigot. A prejudice against Protestantism was thus early so deeply rooted in my heart that, no insults or abuses committed against their false religions (thus called) seemed to me to be unchristian or wicked; and to persecute them, I really supposed was doing God's service.

Such, indeed, were my opinions of the wickedness of Protestantism only two years before my renunciation of Romanism, that when the members of the German Methodist Episcopal Church were building their house of worship in Beaubien street, Detroit, I conscientiously refused to draw a load of brick from the river, lest I should sin against God, and when the small favor was solicited by Mr. W. W. Howland, (one of the Trustees) I impiously answered him "I would not help to build the "Devil's Church." But when the church was completed, and at its dedication, I was there a new man, with new conceptions of religious truth, (for God had converted my soul;) I found that very church to be the "house of God and the gate of Heaven."

But to return to my early experience. Although my prejudices were so deeply rooted against every system of religion but that of the Church of Rome, my mind was frequently troubled by the strange inconsistencies I witnessed, the unkindness and the apparent dishonesty of some of the priests, and by

the fact that their teachings and their deportment seemed to be often at variance with each other. Great pains were taken to clothe the services of Confession and the Eucharist with deep solemnity, and at a very early age I had learned to cherish a most exalted veneration for them; but circumstances connected with my preparation for "First Communion," awakened in my mind many perplexing and afflicting doubts, from which all my confirmed respect for the church never entirely relieved me.

At Charlesburg, the children from seven years old and upward were annually collected, taught catechism, and prepared for "First Communion;" this continued till they were some twelve or fourteen years of age, according to the judgment of the priest. For the last three months preceding the communion, we were daily conducted to the church, where we passed through so fatiguing a course of catechism and penance, that child though I was, I often wondered that the "Blessed Mary" so kind as she was reported to be, did not persuade her son Jesus, who was said to love children so much, to institute some other method of preparation. One circumstance connected with these proceedings was in itself so ludicrous that it rendered the whole service both disgusting and contemptible. An order was issued by the priest that the head of every boy should be shaved of its hair, as close as the sheep is sheared of its wool, and in this condition we received our first communion. I shall ever remember my great disappointment and affliction; I had looked forward to that day with no small degree of interest and pleasure, but by this circumstance, every sensation of veneration fled from my heart, I thought we looked more like so

20 THE INCONSISTENCIES OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

many monkeys than human beings—indeed I was so ashamed that I felt indignant.

The disgust thus excited toward the requirements of the church, had but just passed away when circumstances connected with my preparation for confirmation gave me a second blow, which, though it did not destroy my respect for sacred things, did frequently trouble my heart. A strange absurdity presented itself to me on one occasion while in the catechism class, which to me now, is evidence that the priests cannot be blind to the delusions of their system. The priests had often labored to convince us, and to impress upon our minds as a fact that the wafer when consecrated by their prayers, became the real body of Christ; while engaged in this explanation, one of the boys interrogated him as to why he did not consecrate a larger quantity than they usually did, to which the priest responded that in warm weather they never prepared more than enough for the day, except one to be preserved for sudden sickness, lest by keeping them till morning they should rot. Startled with astonishment, I exclaimed, "Can God rot!" The suspicious manner in which the priest hushed me to silence, without an explanation, still more excited my wonder; and though I did believe the doctrine of transubstantiation, and ate the wafer as my God and Saviour, yet I often wondered over that mystery.

The inconsistencies which characterize the Roman Church, viewed with Protestant eyes, may excite surprise, that the subjects of such abuses and impositions do not turn away to sources of better instruction; but with the impression indelibly fixed in the mind that every other system is false and devilish,

where could they go? What could they do? Had there been any conception of light or hope, even a child would be driven to seek it under the treatment I am about to relate, yet in absence, and ignorant of all hope elsewhere, he must needs submit, and follow this, which was to him the only way to life and heaven.

During my preparation for confirmation with my fellow youths, I was frequently conducted to the church for penance and confession, where for hours together we kneeled upon the bare floor, counting our beads and repeatedly kissing the pavement. On one of these humiliating occasions, having grown weary by the fatiguing exercise, raising myself from the floor I inquired of a lad by my side, if he supposed the girls were nearly through confessing? One of the priests observing it, approached me in great rage, seized me by the arm, smote me in the face with the palm of his hand, and with severe violence prostrated me on the floor, commanding me to continue my penance.

Though, notwithstanding such provoking and abusive treatment, I was still obliged to believe that this was the only way to establish the salvation of my soul, and to escape the miseries of hell. And here I would inform the reader that mine was not an isolated case, but that hundreds of children are thus unkindly treated, under pretence that for such penance the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ will love them the more.

Oh, how different from the counsel and example of our Saviour, who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me;" and who "took them in his arms, laid his hand upon them and blessed them!" How dif-

ferent from that first sweet sentence I read from the blessed gospel, when, by the providence of God it fell into my hands as hereafter stated. It was Matt. xi. 28, 29, and 30: "Come unto me all, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Roman Catholic reader, does not the above account remind you of some circumstances connected with your early training?

CHAPTER II.

Strange Contradictions.—Doubts and Wonders.—Why I continue a Romanist.—Incident at Kingston.—A Bishop Detected.—Gross Imposition in the Confessional.—Amherstburg, C.W.—Priest's Conduct.

NOTWITHSTANDING the unkindness of the priests, and the severity of the duties and penances imposed upon me, in my preparation for first communion and confirmation, I still revered them, as teachers of divine truth and salvation; and conceived no wickedness greater than to speak against such holy men, whom I was taught were so pure in heart that they could not commit sin.

The absolute necessity of confession, and of pardon from the priests, in order to salvation, was so constantly held up before us, that my confidence therein was unwavering for many years, and with most unfeigned sincerity I frequently confessed my sin, and received their professed pardons and blessings, without any just conception of the merits of the atonement by Christ. I did, indeed, suppose that there was no virtue in any of the duties or services of religion, without their prayers and benedictions. When at the age of thirty I was about to leave Quebec for the upper part of the province, I called on Father T——, to confess and obtain pardon for all my past sins. As I left him I inquired, "What shall I do if

I take sick away in the woods, with no priest near to confess me?" When he administered the following surprising counsel:

"If you are taken sick, and no priest is near, kneel down and pray to Jesus Christ, and he will save you anywhere."

I left the confessional, comforted of course, and musing, said to myself, "If Jesus will hear my prayer in the woods, why will he not hear me at home, or anywhere else? What need is there of confessing to the priest at all?" Year after year, circumstances transpired, presenting such strange contradictions, that I was frequently tempted to doubt the sincerity of these professed divine teachers.

The Protestant Christian reader will wonder at my inconsistency, when I say that from that hour, though my confidence in the religion of my fathers was severely shaken, yet I continued to adhere to the Romish Church with a tenacity truly astonishing.

My only method of accounting for it is this: I knew no other way; Protestantism I believed, was devil's religion; mine was the only true church, and all without her pale were hereticks and would surely go to hell. Where then could I go? What else could I do, but cleave to the Church of Rome?

Here was my only hope; here alone was my salvation. Reader, no one can fully realize the power of superstition upon the human mind, but those who have been its subjects. Oh, how I pity the thousands of my French brethren, according to the flesh, who have witnessed all, and more, than I have here related: — who have feared, and doubted, and hoped, and despaired, as I have done: and are, as I was, too,

strangers to the way of escape! It is my earnest prayer to God, our Heavenly Father, that, should any such persons read these pages, they may be blessed, enlightened, and encouraged to do as I have done. Read God's Holy Word; pray to God yourselves;—yes, pray to God alone, through Jesus Christ, and His Holy Spirit will guide you into the way of peace and salvation.

Although, as I have said, my tenacity for the Roman Church continued, and though the first least thought of leaving her had never entered my heart or my head, still, the contradictions spoken of, which I had frequently discovered, led me to watch the priests more particularly. And, despite all my veneration for their sacred office, and faith in the purity of their character, circumstances did occasionally transpire, by which I was compelled to fear that some of them were both avaracious and dishonest,—seeking, and inventing schemes to extract from the poor, the fruits of their toil and industry.

In February, 1834, while at Kingston, U. C., Bishop McD—— engaged my services to sing at church, on the following terms: I agreed to teach two children, by two lessons per week, and sing in church with them for six months, for the sum of fifty dollars. At the time appointed to close the contract we met together, and, at his suggestion, a written agreement was executed. The Bishop drew the instrument himself, and quite hastily requested me to sign it. I presented it to a friend who could read English, for examination, who discovered that the Bishop had written thirty instead of fifty dollars. When he saw that I hesitated, he inquired why I did not sign it. I asked him if it was possible that

a Bishop could both lie and cheat. The Bishop arose stamping the floor, demanded that I should stop my impudence. I deliberately informed him that I could not be either cheated or frightened by a Bishop, and that if he wanted my services, he must be honest and fulfill his agreement, which, after some fruitless efforts to change the terms, he did, correcting the instrument, and the bargain was concluded.

Another circumstance transpired at the same place, by which the honesty of a priest appeared to me in a doubtful light, and by which my confidence in confession and pardon by the priests, was more than ever shaken: When about to leave Kingston, I called upon Father D—— with a sincere heart to confess my sins, and as I could speak but little English, I begged the favor to confess in the French language. The favor was readily granted. At the close, he was about to pronounce my pardon without farther ceremony, when I requested him to interrogate me, as was customary, as to the cause and character of particular sins, when, to my surprise, he informed me he had not understood a word I had said. I was so grieved, disappointed, and offended, that I arose from my knees, called him a base impostor, and left the confessional.

The imposition thus practised upon me at Kingston, with the accumulating causes of suspicion of dishonesty of the priests, weaned me in a great measure from the confessional; and yet, as I had no hope of salvation but through these means, I was compelled by necessity, again and again, to go, although its constant tendency was to excite in me both doubts and disgust. I will detain the reader with but one more of these dark exhibitions of iniquity, to which thousands

are daily submitting, vainly supposing that this, and this alone, is the way of salvation.

This crowning act of priestly hypocrisy and brutishness, transpired at Fort Malden (now Amherstburg), C. W., A.D. 1839. While seriously and sincerely confessing my sins before Father V—— he interrogated me upon subjects of the most beastly nature — presenting questions so vulgar and obscene, that decency forbids description, and at which, wicked man as I was, I was so disgusted and enraged, that I called him a blackguard in the confessional, and refusing a blessing from so base a man, I preferred to leave the throne of grace unpardoned. But the worst features of his degraded conduct were not developed until I learned the heart-shocking intelligence from my wife that he pursued the same beastly course with her too, occupying the solemn season of confession in conversation on such unchaste, lewd, and debasing subjects, which none but the most abandoned to profligacy could possibly take pleasure in.

And yet, reader, I was still a Roman Catholic. Protestantism was still devil's religion to me; and I did still firmly believe that salvation could be found no where but in the Church of Rome. I doubt not but that thousands who constantly go to confession, have been and often are, treated in the same wicked manner; and though they, as we were, are often disgusted and offended, still, like us, continue, because they know no other way,— their hope and salvation are all here.

Dear reader, permit me once more to pray that our gracious God will bless these reflections upon this "mystery of iniquity," that my French friends may see the light I have seen, confess to God alone, and from his Holy Spirit receive pardon and peace.

Oh, how great a debtor I am to grace! though long I lived in this darkness, and under this yoke of superstition, "the lines have fallen to me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage."

Where shall my wondering soul begin? —
 How shall I all to heaven aspire?
 "A slave redeemed from hell and sin;
 A brand plucked from the eternal fire.
 How shall I equal triumph raise,
 And sing my Great Deliverer's praise?"

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CHAPTER III.

Removes to Detroit, Michigan.—My faith in the Doctrine of the Infallibility of the Church.—The contradictions of Custom awaken alarm.—Peculiarities of the Irish and French.—The Scapular Imposition.—The first decline of my confidence in the Church's Infallibility.

IN the year one thousand eight hundred and forty, I removed to Michigan, U. S., and settled in the city of Detroit. I cannot refrain from regarding this removal as being providential, and by which God in great mercy brought me under a variety of influences, all of which had an important tendency to enlighten my mind, and prepare my heart for the reception of his truth and great salvation. And while the result has crowned me and my own family with so many precious blessings, I trust that many of my countrymen, who are now under the galling yoke of priestly domination and superstition, will soon become sharers of the same inestimable treasure.

However, when I settled in Detroit I was very far from even a bending toward Protestantism; I had indeed no other faith, no other hope but the Church of Rome. The doctrine of the infallibility of the church was my great prop; I bowed obsequiously to this dogma, and in this all the disgusting developments of its fallacy I had seen seemed to sink and become oblivious. How could I choose but to arrive

at such a conclusion? The Pope occupied the place of God, and had the keys of heaven and hell; and I believed that he could instruct the Bishop, and they the Priests, and then their teaching must be absolutely true, whatever disagreement I fancied might be discoverable in their deportment. Just so much was I then a slave to superstition.

But in the progress of events my faith in this strong-hold of Popery was destined soon to be fearfully shaken. First, I found myself exceedingly perplexed by the discovery of strange incongruities, amounting to point blank contradictions, between the customs of the church in Detroit and Lower Canada. One of these strange anomalies, was the fact that while the priests in Quebec would not pardon a penitent short of from three to six weeks' confession and penance, those of Detroit would dispense pardons at the first confession.

The difference also between the respect paid to different saints, (to St. Peter and St. Patrick in particular,) astonished me very much. To me, a Saint was a holy being, and in our one true church all were equally good and worthy of veneration, and to speak profanely of either, was equally wicked in my mind. But in Detroit I found that the Saints of different nations were made a subject of ridicule; especially between the Irish and the French, which facts in themselves produced in my heart feelings of horror; but the most painful effects upon my mind were the glaring inconsistencies in the church's professed infallibility.

The severest blow to my faith in this *rock* of Popery, resulted from the introduction of the celebrated Scapular; and from this event I date the commence-

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ment of the actual decline of my confidence in the traditional rites of the church. A priest visiting the city in A. D. 1842, and addressing the church upon this important rite, informed us that the "Blessed Virgin and Mother of God" came down to a Nunnery and presented to the holy sisters a piece of cloth about two inches square, (having some sacred initials on it) and directed them to manufacture its resemblance for distribution among the people. We were directed to wear them suspended by a cord round the neck, and that whosoever would wear them and repeat two "Ave Marias" daily, "*Oh Mary, you never sinned, pray for me,*" that no accident whatever befalling us should do us any injury. That falling from a building we should be preserved, or into the water we could not drown, or should anyone shoot the deadly bullet from the rifle at us, it would glance off and do us no harm. He discoursed eloquently upon the surprising benefits of this precious *relic*, and declared that an individual who wore one, having resolved upon committing suicide by drowning, leaped into a river three times and floated upon the water, and that after the third attempt he divested himself of the Scapular, plunged in, and was drowned.

The Nuns of the city collected a large number of worn out pantaloons and coats, from which they manufactured them in great quantities, and multitudes flocked to receive them. Among the rest, with my companion, I went to obtain this gracious and miraculous preservative from accident; and some fourteen hundred bowed down before the Bishop and devoutly received the precious favor. There was one act which added materially to the charm of this, as fit doesto many of the relics bestowed; it was its

being professedly given without money and without price. But it is expected that once a year when *Mass* is said for the blessed Saints of the Holy Society of the Scapular, every recipient of the favor will present a free-will offering of some two shillings or more for the spiritual benefit of the holy society. On the occasions alluded to, a similar free-will offering was solicited, and a large table was literally covered to a heap with quarter and half dollars and other silver coin.

The confidence of many in the Scapular remains unshaken to this day, while they wear them and trust in them with devout sincerity; but with others, as with my own family, it has long since been regarded as a worthless imposition. The fallacy of this reputed preserver, was demonstrated in a very few years. One of my neighbors, Mr. L——, who received it by my side, was missing from his family for some three months, when it was announced that a human body had been found floating in the river. Those who had friends missing, hastened to the spot to see if they could recognize their lost ones, and among the rest Mrs. L—— went in search of her absent husband. The body was in such a state of decomposition that no human feature could be discovered; but as the corpse was being moved, Mrs. L—— requested that they would look for the Scapular, stating that she should know her husband could she see it, which they did, and found one by which she recognized the body of her drowned husband. Thus the very thing in which he had religiously trusted to save him from accident, possessed no other virtue than to testify that he had been drowned.

When these facts came to our ears, the imposition

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was too apparent, and after a serious consultation with my family, we cast them aside in disgust and disappointment. I still preserve the old Scapular, which I occasionally exhibit to my friends, as an object in which I once trusted as a Saviour, while I rejoice that by divine grace I have been enabled to turn away from idols to serve the living God.

Oh how gross are the superstitions of the Romanist; I fear but few Protestant christians know the import of the little trinkets and beads which they wear round their necks, or carry about their persons. There is nothing that the Protestant can prize in their prayers, in their communion with God, or in the atonement of Christ, more precious or of more importance than the Romanists are compelled to believe there is in counting their beads, crossing themselves and kissing their images.

When I reflect upon my own blind confidence in the superstitious usages of the Church of Rome, I wonder more that I ever should have been enlightened even by the reading of the Bible. Perhaps the reader may not be aware of the superstitious confidence which is cherished by the members of the Roman Church in their pretended holy water, and of the vast quantities annually consecrated for their service by the priests. Generally, the Saturday before Easter, is set apart for the consecration and procuring of this element; and where the people are the most superstitious, there it is in greater demand, and consequently there is much more use made of it in Lower Canada than in Detroit. But if the reader has opportunity, let him observe, and he will see on the day spoken of, multitudes of people flocking to the priests with their bottles, jugs and

kegs, for their usual supply. Surprising as it may seem to my Protestant friends, there was a time when I almost excelled my brethren in my confidence in the virtue of this consecrated preservative. In the month of May, 1839, having just entered the married life, and having expended all my little treasure in building a small tenement for a residence, I became much alarmed, and anxious for its safety, on account of a most terrific storm; mingled with fearful lightning and thunder. The tempest, which took place on the eleventh of the month, lasted from five o'clock P. M., till eight A. M. next day. With my neighbors, I fled to my beads and holy water, and at every repeated flash I repeated my sprinklings and crossing therewith, until I had exhausted the bottle and used up all my store, and really supposed that I owed my preservation to the water, and regarded it with increased veneration.

A similar imposition to the Scapular was attempted, but did not meet with equal success. During the period of my Scripture researches, a priest addressed us on the Sabbath upon the Society for the Propagation of Faith; he spoke of its existence elsewhere, and of the great loss we sustained by not supporting the society in Detroit. He read the constitution, and commented upon it very eloquently, and informed us that by paying four cents per week we might become members and share the great benefits of the faith. He also informed us that he should visit us from house to house, and that as he had now fully explained the nature and benefits of the organization he wished no questions asked when he called, but the names and contributions of the people. Accordingly, in a few days he called on

me, handed me the constitution and requested me to sign. I began to interrogate him on its design, when he said, "that I might be partaker of the faith, but that if I did not wish to sign the constitution he would go." I refused to give up without an explanation, and wished him to tell me how much faith he sold for four cents per week, and if he sold it by the pint, by the yard, or by the pound. He grew very much excited, and demanded the paper, when I charged him with imposition, and read from the Bible that "Jesus Christ is author and finisher of our faith," that "by grace ye are saved, that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." And I further advised him to go home and cease to practise his impositions upon the people, or that I would follow him round the city with the Bible in my hand, and would expose him to the people. I did follow him through two or three blocks of buildings, but he did not call anywhere, and finally returned home, and I heard no more of the Society of Faith.

CHAPTER IV.

My zeal in the Temperance Reform.--How I prevailed on Bishop L. to move in the enterprise for the benefit of my French Brethren.--How I was excluded from the Society because I opposed the Money-making projects of the Priests.--My grief and perplexity.--Why I mingled with the Protestants.--A barrel of beer at the house of the President of the Temperance Society.

IN the year 1841, when Bishop L. arrived in Detroit, the cause of Temperance had begun to excite considerable attention. I had for sometime previous enlisted myself in this good cause, and while I beheld much of the evils of intemperance, I had seen also a great amount of good resulting from the enterprise. I had also discovered to the grief of my heart, that my Romanist brethren were given to habits of drinking too freely, rendering themselves beastly and their families poor and miserable; and what to me was still worse, I had become satisfied that drinking was the prime promoter of profanity and quarreling, which was by far too common among them. I was still a Papist; the first thought of changing my religion had not been cherished, and the Protestant religion was as much as ever devil's religion to me. So on the arrival of the Bishop I hastened to make his acquaintance, introduced the subject of temperance, and argued the necessity of a temperance society among our people. The Bishop professed to be pleased with the suggestion, and very soon called a

meeting to consult upon the propriety of such an organization, which resulted in the immediate formation of a Temperance Society. A constitution was prepared and presented, but some difference of opinion arising as to whether beer and cider were intoxicating drinks, or if they contained alcohol, a committee, composed of myself and two others, were appointed to procure professional testimony upon this point. We accordingly obtained the opinions of Doctors Pitcher, Russell and Houghton, to the effect that they were intoxicating, and consequently the use of them was excluded from our pledge.

It was in this temperance society which I had labored so much to establish, that my first disagreement with the Bishop transpired. I had been associated with the Protestants in their temperance operations, and had partook of their zeal, and wished to imitate their example. But my zeal, which among Protestants would have been commendable, was among the Romanists, intolerable.

My first offensive act was an effort in a speech to stir up our priests and leading men to more zeal by showing that the Protestants were actually doing more good by their temperance efforts, than we were doing by all the services of the church. My second and most serious offence, was by my opposition to one feature of the constitution which I thought was unnecessary and inconsistent. As other temperance societies were introducing benefit features into their organizations, so it was proposed that every member should pay four cents a week into ours, which should create a fund for their benefit. But the benefits were to be, the purchasing of a service of mass for every member that should die. This was represented

a very blessed feature in the organization, that all of us should be sharers in the precious benefits of the prayers of the priest at our death. The idea of their assistance in the recovery of their souls from purgatory was, to many, an important consideration; but to me it was preposterous. It seemed to me that a temperance society and the church were two different things, and that if any of the people should abstain from drink and thus invest a portion of their savings, that should they be sick or unfortunate, they ought to share the benefits of this fund while living. So I opposed the scheme with this argument: "that if a horse could have his oats during life and the labor of life, they might do him good; but I saw no propriety of saving the oats till he was dead." The evident design was to bring in a large revenue to the priests, whose schemes I had for some time been watching, and had observed that every project had an unfailling tendency to this ne point. But my speech was very offensive, and the displeasure of the priests was excited against me; and at the next meeting of the society a revised constitution was proposed and adopted, having a clause prohibiting any person from speaking in the meeting except at the call or by permission of the Bishop. This, of course, silenced my tongue, and it was evidently designed to prevent my taking a part in the proceedings.

Being thus excluded from the only field of usefulness where I thought I could labor for the good of my brethren, I informed the Bishop that in religion, I could submit to him and to the priests; but in the temperance cause, I must be a free man, and if they would not allow me to talk in their meetings, I must

beg leave to withdraw. This was the most painful wound I had ever received from the church. I was a Roman Catholic; my desire was to labor with and for the benefit of the church; but being cut off from this privilege I mingled more freely with Protestant people in their various organizations. For this too they waged persecution against me, and when I joined the Sons of Temperance, a severe attack was made upon me for having joined a “ secret society,” and the people were warned against following me into such acts of wickedness.

Some few weeks after my withdrawal from the Romanist Temperance Society, an incident transpired which, though it was on my part an exhibition of great insolence, yet I felt justified in reproving one of the principal actors in this temperance society. Passing a brewery, I observed the servant of the Bishop enter with a note in his hand. My curiosity somewhat excited, and being a little suspicious too, I followed him in, and learned from the clerk that it was an order for a barrel of beer, to be taken to the Bishop’s residence after nine o’clock in the evening. At the hour of nine, I was pacing my way to and fro past the house when the dray arrived. Said I to the drayman, “ Is that beer for the Bishop ? ” and receiving an answer in the affirmative, I proffered my services to ring the bell. I did so, and was careful to ring the bell which I knew would call out the Bishop in person. When he opened the door I addressed him thus: “ Bishop, this man has brought a barrel of beer for the President of the Temperance Society.” The door was suddenly shut in my face and the President retired from observation.

CHAPTER V.

My continued respect for the Bishop as my only Spiritual Guide — How strong and galling are the chains of superstition — My fears and dread of purgatory — My hatred of the Bible. — How I happened first to read it. — What I read I thought must be the religion of the Sons of Temperance. — I took the New Testament to Bishop L. — How he condemned it. I returned it to its owner. — Purchased a New Testament. — My fears of guilt and dread of penance. — I obtained a Bible. — Surprising discovery of the guilt of idolatry. — Took the Bible to the Bishop. — He condemned it again. — Would not destroy it. — The end of our friendship. — Visit to, and opinion of, Protestant Churches. — My ridicule of the Methodists. — What the Bible says of Women speaking and praying in Meeting. — The growing distress of my heart

AFTER all that I have stated the Bishop was still my spiritual guide, and Sabbath after Sabbath I sat under his teaching, and occasionally went to confession. But the scapular imposition, following the temperance movement, greatly increased my perplexity, and the intervening time, from the year 1842 to January, 1849, was to me a period of most indelible mental anguish and solicitude. The chain which binds the child of superstition to the errors imbibed in youth, is strong as adamant; none but the slave of such indelible impressions can realize its galling influence. Without superhuman courage, who can resist the strength of such fears as result from the teachings that the priests hold the keys of heaven and hell, and that their continuation in the pains of purgatory, or

release from them, depends upon the individual intention and the prayers of those pastors of the church. Oh how painful, how distressing the conflict, characterised as it is too, by all the dreadful epithets of infidel and heretic! I have no language to describe the horrors of mind I sometimes endured, from the thought and the fear, that in my opposition to the Bishop and the church, I might bring upon me all the curses I had heard pronounced upon the apostates. Yet God, who is full of compassion, and abundant in mercy and grace, has had mercy upon me, leading me by a way that I knew not, and causing that which I most despised to be my guiding star.

In the month of September, 1847, my opinions of Protestantism as a system of religion, were not at all modified, and my hatred toward their Bible was such that had I found one in the street, I should have trampled it under foot. During this month, while waiting on a business errand in the store of Mr. F. Wetmore, I occupied the passing moments by examining a book which lay upon the counter. The book being in the French language, I obtained the loan of it for more extended perusal. The moral lessons it imparted, were such as I had seen exhibited in the deportment of members of the temperance association to which I then belonged. I had, again and again, observed to my wife, that I could not understand what there was in the Order of the "Sons of Temperance" that could make them so kind and so brotherly, for I found men of all kinds of religions there, and yet they all seemed to love one another as brethren, and I felt constrained to confess that the moral influence of their principles was more salutary than even that of our

Roman religion. After reading some pages of the book in the store, I hastened to my home, and informed my wife I had found a book which had got the religion of the Sons of Temperance in it. I thought I could not be mistaken, for I had read on first opening the book in Matt. xi, 28, 29 and 30: "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

My wife, with myself, admired the beautiful sentiments and counsels of the good book, and with great eagerness we read its blessed pages, growing more and more delighted with its exposition of a religion, having so wonderful a tendency to make all men love one another.

Up to this time, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, the Baptists, and all other denominations, were, to me, different religions; but I had read this book at first with no suspicion that it was Protestant. But the contrast between these teachings, and the practices of my Roman brethren, being so great, I concluded that if the Bishop should be apprised of the excellence of this book, he might recommend it to the people, and by it, do them much good. So I hastened away to the Bishop, showed him the book, and began pointing out its excellencies; when, to my surprise, he professed to have been for a long time acquainted with it, condemned it in unmeasured terms, as the very worst of books, and demanded that it should be returned to the owner immediately. Like a faithful son of the church, I returned the book to the owner, though not without reluctance and regret.

This book was the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and this was my first acquaintance with the Book of God — the Word of Life.

But, though deprived of the blessed book, the spirit of its pages seemed to follow me, like an angel of mercy, and both night and day, its hallowed sentiments operated upon my heart, creating a longing for a more intimate acquaintance with its counsels. Not many months after, while at Amherstburg, in Canada, I had an opportunity to purchase a Testament of a colporteur, which I did for the sum of one shilling and sixpence. But never did thief lay hold of forbidden fruit with more trembling and fearfulness, than I did upon that sacred volume. This small sum spent on a protestant book, I well knew would subject me to frowns, and threats, and severe penance. But the lucid lessons of life, read as from the lips of the Saviour, soon revived those former feelings of admiration for such a book, the tendency of which could but be to make all men good and happy. But before I had availed myself of the benefits of the confessional for the sin of this purchase, I received the favor of the whole Bible of a Mr. Mary, a colporteur from Montreal, in Canada. This opened a new field for investigation, and I now read the true ten commandments of my God for the first time in my life. I saw too, with great surprise, the mutilated condition in which the divine law had been taught me from my childhood. I felt horror-stricken at the thought of the perversion by the priests of those commandments which forbid us to *bow down to*, or to worship images. The law, as taught by the priests, was that we *might bow down to*, so we did not *worship the material of which the image was*

made; but that to pray to Mary, to Peter, and other Saints, through these pictures, was not sin against God. Yet the commandment reads (Exodus xx. 4, 5, and 6), "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. *Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them*, nor serve them for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." Now it was that my fears came like a flood upon me; if this was the law of God, I was living in the guilt of idolatry daily; and while my sins were provoking God to jealousy, I was constantly heaping up wrath for my own beloved children. But who could relieve, who could teach me? I had but one spiritual guide, and that was Bishop L——, to whom I resolved to go again, show him this book, and seek his learned counsel. To the Bishop I went, but with no better success than before, for he not only condemned the book, but demanded its destruction. I begged he would lend me some book by which I could learn how to live as a christian should, and bring up my children in the fear of God, but he answered me roughly, saying: "You need no book; obey your priests, and you will do well enough." I interrogated him upon certain portions of the Bible, in the commandments, and in 1 Tim. iv., of what the Spirit saith of those who should come, teaching false doctrines, forbidding to marry, commanding to abstain from meats, &c; but the Bishop grew quite excited and treated me so badly that I was both disappointed and

grieved. My call upon the Bishop was from the sincerity of my heart to obtain counsel how to live and how to die. Had it been in his power to present a reasonable argument against the Bible, I believe I should have given it its deserved consideration. But when he, in an unreasonable manner, and without any reason, condemned what was evidently so good, I became suspicious that the Word of God was not the guide of his heart. I then distinctly informed him that I began to doubt whether, as a preacher, he preached the truth from the Word of God, and that rather than destroy it, I should take the Bible to church every Sunday and watch him in his scripture readings and preaching, to satisfy myself as to this fact.

This conversation closed the friendly acquaintance which so long had existed between me and my only religious counsellor, yet for two whole years I waited upon his ministry, always taking my Bible to test the doctrines he preached.

My wife, who, from the time the Bishop condemned the Testament, had been restless and fearful, anticipating with trembling the dread consequences of the anathemas of the priests, now began to grow more interested in the study of the Scriptures herself, and after much consultation we solemnly concluded no more to bow down to images, or to make the sign of the cross, either at home or at church. This change in our deportment was soon discovered, and we became objects of observation at church and abroad, and the denunciations of the priests began to fall fearfully upon us.

By this conclusion, and the result of my criticisms on the preaching and character of the priests, by which I had lost all confidence in them as teachers of re-

ligion, we were as a ship driven out to sea without compass or chart. The services of the Church of Rome had no longer any thing even sacred in them, yet I was nothing but a Romanist. This was an hour of trial, this was indeed the hour of darkness to my soul; I was trying to be a Christian, but what form I should assume I had not the most remote conception.

As succeeding Sabbaths returned, we now wandered round the city, visiting the different Protestant churches, which we still supposed were all different religions; while we had serious doubts if any one of them could be the true religion of God. We heard excellent sermons among the Episcopalians and Presbyterians, among the Baptists and the Methodists, but whatever good we heard, could not be appreciated, coming from sources we had been wont to regard with so much suspicion. The Methodists, of all others attracted our attention, and contributed to our amusement, especially when a woman arose in one of their services, making both a speech and a prayer. Mrs. P—— observed that they could not be the people of God, for who ever heard of ladies officiating at church? But in our Bible perusals we were soon led to correct these our hasty conclusions, when we read in Luke, 2 chap. 56 verse, that when the Saviour was presented at the temple of Jerusalem, and Simeon had closed his rejoicings in God: “There was one Anna, a prophetess, entered at that instant, and she gave thanks likewise to the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.” We read too, in 1 Cor., xi, 5, what **St. Paul** wrote about women and their privileges in the church of God. Here we were con-

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vinced that according to the Apostles' teaching, women might take a part in the worship of God, when adorned with that chastity of attire which becometh their sex. And here again our perplexity increased, and what could be truth or what was error, were to us alike ponderous questions. Month after month passed away, during which we took no part in religious worship anywhere. We still continued to read the Scriptures, and every circumstance like the above excited our eagerness to learn the truth as God had taught it to his people. We gained much light on the subject of practical piety, and while with reflection I viewed it, we were waiting at the "Pool of Bethesda," but had no friendly hand, when the waters were troubled to aid us, to step in that we might be healed.

How amazingly both the wisdom and mercy of God are manifest in the events. We were attracted by no displays of pomp or ceremonies, by no exhibition of correct or most consistent creeds; but God by his own spirit, prepared our hearts for the embrace of His salvation, that in our lives and death we might glorify Him.

I had now one desire above all others, and that was to find the true religion of the Son of God for the salvation of my soul. I wanted too, just such a religion as I found described by the lives, teachings, and death of Jesus Christ and his Apostles; but I had no earthly teacher. The reader may imagine better than I can describe the painfulness of this hour of darkness. I have heard, I have read nothing, so graphically descriptive of my case, as the following stanzas by Rev. C. Wesley, Methodist Hymn Book, page 252:

LINES DESCRIPTIVE OF MY CASE.

“ A poor blind child I wander here,
If haply I may feel thee near.
O dark ! dark ! dark ! I still must say,
Amidst the blaze of gospel day.

Thee, only thee, I fain would find,
And cast the world and flesh behind ;
Thou, only thou, to me be given,
Of all thou hast in earth or heaven.”

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CHAPTER VI.

My continued distress of mind.--How unexpectedly I went to the Second M. E. Church.--How the power of the Holy Ghost fell upon me.--My conversion.--More light from the Bible.--My fears resulting from former superstitions --The benefit of good counsel.--My Roman baptism with oil, salt, and cream.--My Christian baptism with pure water.

It was in the month of December, 1849, while laboring under the state of mental suspense and solicitude, spoken of in the preceding chapter, that a Sabbath dawned upon the world, the memory of which, will never be erased from our hearts. We arose with the brightness of day, but to us all Sabbath days were days of gloom, while through the city we wandered, as "through dry places, seeking rest and finding none." Being weary with our wanderings, we resolved this day to return to the house we had partly forsaken, with but little hope of finding it "swept and garnished" with the truth of God; for we had long since become satisfied that every lesson of pretended instruction given here, but darkened counsel by words without knowledge. But the Sabbath must be spent some way, and to relieve its gloomy tediousness we started once more to hear the Latin songs and witness the unscriptural devotions. But on our way to the French Catholic Church we passed the Second M. E. Church on Congress street, where the Rev. G.

Taylor was pastor, and Mrs. P—— enquired what people worshipped there? and being informed, at her proposal, we went in with the gathering congregation. Our attention was soon arrested by the reading of a hymn by the pastor in a most solemn and affecting manner, followed by such a prayer as I thought no human being ever made before. Such an overwhelming sense of the divine presence fell upon me, that I could conceive of nothing but that God was there, and so powerfully was my heart affected that I burst into tears and wept profusely, and when rising from our inclined position during prayer, I found my companion similarly affected and weeping at my side. The sermon which followed, with hymn, prayer and all parts of the service seemed to be all addressed to me, descriptive of my case, and performed in my behalf. These were unusual emotions to our hearts; they could not be imaginary, for we had no idea, or anticipation of such influences, but as with the strangers at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost had fallen upon us while we listened to his preached words. I waited not to enquire concerning the apostolic descent of the authority of the minister, but recognized in him the messenger of peace, as an angel of light to guide my fearful steps. I felt that at the "Pool of Bethesda" the Son of God had met me to bid me to be whole. The resolve was here made, "This people shall be my people, and their God shall be my God," and passing out of the house, as my companion took hold on my arm, I said to her, "this is my home," and she having been simultaneously blessed with myself, answered, "and mine too."

We now hastened to our home and read God's

Holy Word with renewed eagerness and delight, rejoicing as did the shepherds of old, who led by the "star in the east" had found the promised Saviour. The pastor having advertised a class meeting in the basement of the church for Monday evening, I made my way to the spot at an early hour, and placing myself in a conspicuous position, was soon observed by the leader, Hon. Ross Wilkins, by whose pious counsels I was still more enlightened and encouraged to believe in the Son of God to the salvation of my soul. May God abundantly reward him and the pastor of the church, through whose patient and persevering counsels and assistance, I and my dear family have been made partakers of the hope and joy of this salvation!

But let not the reader suppose that because I speak of being blessed with a sense of the divine presence, and in the hands of good counsel, that the work of my recovery from the thraldom of superstition was perfected. It was now that I began to feel the full power of doctrines which were engrafted upon my mind in the days of my youth. I had, up to this time read the Bible, not as the system of the Protestant religion, but as the word and religion of God; but now to my surprise I was embracing the Protestant religion. Now upon my mind, with ghost-like hideousness, rushed all my former views of this system, as the religion of devils and the road to hell. The horrid excommunications to which I had more than once listened, until my blood ran chill, seemed to be sounding in my ears in all their appalling fearfulness, and the anticipation of the awful denunciations and dreaded epithets, such as Infidel, Heretic, Apostate, and Devil, which I knew would now be

pronounced upon me, produced many very unpleasant sensations. If it were true that the priests hold the keys of heaven and hell, and if without their intercessions souls must remain for ever in purgatory, I was aware that the blackness of darkness would be my portion for ever. I stood now as upon a rock with only a foothold surface; behind me were the quicksands of superstition and delusion, which I saw were full of idolatry and sin; and before me was the enchanted ground which I had conscientiously avoided through all my life as the path that leads directly down to the shades of death. It was my earnest desire, that leaving one error, I might not plunge myself into a greater, and so expressed myself in the first love feast I attended. I said it seemed to me that I had just broken out from a dark cellar, where for forty years I had been hid from the light of the sun, and feared, lest that with my eyes dazzled by its sudden brightness, I might rush unwittingly, over some fearful precipice. I said I was sitting upon the fence, ready to leap on the side of Protestantism, but desired most earnestly that it was a large stone, broad and secure, on which I could build my hopes of salvation.

Considerations like those of the salvation of my own soul and the souls of my family, were not trifles; this was a work for eternity, and all the interest involved therein were of eternal duration. But to God be all the glory, the day of decision soon arrived, for through the mercy of God I had been conducted to a teacher who could successfully point me to the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

The first services received from my new spiritual

guide were in frequent visits to my house for the purpose of explaining to us the word of God. Mrs. P.— and myself being provided with Bibles in the French language, and Mr. T—— with one in English, we directed his attention to many of those difficult portions of the Scriptures, which to us were inexplicable. Every visit gave us increasing light, especially did we profit by an explanation of the ten commandments, and the great mystery in the sixth chapter of the Gospel of St. John, concerning the eating the body and drinking the blood of Jesus Christ. This mysterious chapter, by which the doctrine of transubstantiation is supported by the Roman Church, appeared to me in its proper light as soon as I had acquired a knowledge of saving faith. I read indeed, in verse 53: “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you;” but again, I read in 63d verse: “It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the *words* that I speak unto you *they* are spirit and *life*.” These, with the light shed upon this subject by the 35th verse: “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me, shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst,” set the question for ever at rest in my heart. And now amid all the contending fears which pressed like an incubus upon me, my soul laid hold of the promises, and my experience at this time is better expressed by a sacred poet than I can describe it:

“ In hope, against all human hope,
 Self desperate, I believe,
 Thy quickening word shall raise me up,
 Thou wilt thy spirit give.

spiritual

The thing surpasses all my thoughts:
 But faithful is my Lord,
 Through unbelief I stagger not,
 For God hath spoke the word.

Faith, mighty Faith, the promise sees,
 And looks to that alone;
 Laughs at impossibilities,
 And cries — it shall be done."

Now I began to realize, that while "with open face I beheld as in a glass, the glory of God, I was changed into the same image, by the Spirit of the Lord."

This was the blessed result of heeding the counsel of him whom God had evidently sent to turn me away from idols, to serve the living God. And here was the demonstration of the truth of the Bible, in the realization of the fulfillment of that first sweet promise I read. I had read as from the life of the Saviour: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." My companion, who cheerfully joined with me in penitential prayer, soon realized the peace of mind and an evidence of her acceptance with God.

From this time, my house became a house of prayer, and often was found to be the gate of heaven to our souls. The change of our domestic customs, the laying aside of our images, beads and relics, and our happy singing and extemporaneous prayers, had a salutary effect upon our children, and the oldest, my daughter Charlotte, at ten years of age became a happy subject of God's converting grace.

The act of uniting with the church being contemplated, and reviewing my introduction to the Roman Catholic Church, I was led to compare their mode

of Baptism with that enjoined in the Scriptures. I had thought till now that I should count my early baptism valid, performed as it was by the sincere wish of my parents, that I might be numbered with the children of God in covenant and hope; but the Gospel required baptism with water; and I and my children had been baptised with oil, cream, and salt, as well as water, applied to my breast, neck, nose, mouth, eyes and ears, with cotton wool. These superstitious appendages to this holy sacrament, seemed to me to destroy its validity, and desiring to be truly *apostolic* and *christian* in my proceedings, myself, wife, and daughter united with the Second M. E. Church, and were, with the younger children, baptized with pure water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER VII.

My renunciation of Popery brings persecution—my family's loneliness—God raises friends for us. The Romanists report that I sold my religion for money—an Allegory—more persecution defended by law—how God answered the prayer of faith—the great revival—more of the French people converted—the burning of a Bible—a thrilling incident.

The event of my public renunciation of Romanism and my union with the M. E. Church, soon reached the ears of the Bishop and priests, and we were of course soon turned over to Satan, and the faithful of the church were warned to avoid us, as being most dangerous in society. All our Roman Catholic neighbors turned their backs upon us, some of them even refusing to speak as they met us in the street, and others at seeing us, passed over to the other side to avoid meeting us. The relatives of Mrs. P., some of whom lived in the city, arrayed themselves against us, abandoned us to what they called our heresy, and refused to exchange the customary courtesies which had so long been practised by us. This was the "unkindest cut" of all, because it left us an isolated family, without a single French family with whom we could associate; and as we could then speak English but poorly, we were no society for the American people. But by the blessing of God, we soon surmounted this difficulty, for

our new relation to the church brought the fulfillment of the promise, "He that forsaketh friends for my sake, shall receive in this life an hundred fold, and in the world to come life everlasting," soon replenished our deserted social circle, for the hearts of God's people were every where open to encourage and sustain us. Yet while God blessed us on one hand, persecution poured in like a flood on the other, and soon some of the strangest reports imaginable were circulated concerning the events which led to my renunciation of Romanism. Since I had lived after the strictest manner of their religion, an upright Roman Catholic, there was no charge of wickedness they could pronounce against me; and because the laws of the United States are so stringent upon the subject of the defamation of character, it is but little the priest ever dare to say before the public by way of denunciation. But in private, and in the confessional, they can, and often do vent their spite freely, by which as by a "main spring," the deportment of multitudes are regulated with reference to such things.

Among other reports it was soon very generally circulated that the Protestants had given me six hundred dollars to renounce the Roman faith and embrace theirs; but even this had a more salutary effect than was intended, as it appeared like a tacit acknowledgment that François Pepin was, after all, a man of some importance, for as some of them said afterwards, it was not every Romanist that could get six hundred dollars for his religion. In return, I availed myself of the benefit of the accusation by proclaiming that the report was an allegory, for the difference in the value of the Protestant over the

Roman religion, was more than that amount, in what to me is more precious than silver or gold—the benefits purchased by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

I was next assailed while passing quietly along the streets, by members of the French Church, wagging their heads, throwing their mouths and faces into all kinds of hideous forms by contortions, and calling me by every vile epithet imaginable. The treatment I thus received from persons who called themselves christians, was such that if received from any source when I was a Romanist, I would have retaliated revengefully, but I had now taken upon me the yoke of Christ, who was meek and lowly of heart, and how truly in him I found rest to my soul. I was indeed so graciously sustained in these persecutions, that at times I could not but believe that God had interposed for my good in a very special manner. One instance in particular will convince the reader of this fact, while it will show the great benefit of having faith in God. An individual, Mr. B. pursued me from day to day, from five to six days in succession, following me from street to street as he was employed with a dray, on a variety of errands, calling me heretic, dog, devil, and other foul names, sing at and cursing me most profanely and challenging me to fight him. I returned him civility for his insults, which were answered with more bitter and vulgar invective, until it became intolerable, and by the advice of friends, I applied to the Police for protection. As soon as the warrant was issued, I perceived that my enemies were ready to rejoice; that they had provoked me to resistance, and fearing lest that the proceedings in the prosecution might

appear revengeful, I prayed most earnestly to the Lord that he would interpose, take charge of the affair, and save his cause from reproach. I was yet but poorly taught in the mystery of *faith*, yet I had read in the Bible, "call upon me in the day of trouble and I will hear thee and thou shall glorify me." "Ask what ye will in my name and it shall be given you." So I prayed and believed and submitted my cause to God, and God did indeed answer my prayer.

The hour of court having arrived, in company with my counsel and witnesses, I repaired to the office of justice, where we met Mr. B. the defendant, who as soon as he saw me, began to repeat his foul epithets and abuses until arrested by the Court, who inquired, "if he knew there was a jail in town for the purpose of taking care of such men as he was?" And turning to me he said, Mr. Pepin, we do not need you, nor your counsel, nor your witnesses,—this man is witness enough against himself; and turning to him he said, "now, Mr. B. if you can give the necessary bonds to keep the peace with Mr. P. hereafter, you can go too; but if not, the Policemen will take you to jail." The result of this prosecution had more than one advantage, for while it saved the cause of the Protestant from reproach, it did also for a time save me from public persecution.

During the winter of 1849-50, the Second M. E. Church to which I had attached myself, was blessed with a season of great refreshing from the presence of the Lord, which resulted in the conversion of more than one hundred and twenty-five persons. Being full of the love of God and zeal for my brethren, I immediately commenced among my French

neighbors, inviting them to meeting, and making them the subjects of the special prayers of the church. It was a meeting attended with the presence and power of God to an extraordinary degree, so that scarcely an individual was known to enter the church during service, but felt the awakening spirit of grace. During the progress of the meeting some twenty-five French people placed themselves under the prayers of the church and the counsels of the pastor, and publicly renounced their faith in Romanism. The whole of this number were not converted however, for from mistaken views of religion, some of them supposed that a mere declaration or profession of the faith of the Protestants was all that was necessary, and consequently, though they were nominal Protestants, they were not christians. But some of them were truly converted, and we began to believe, what the pastor had already publicly declared, "that God was about to raise up a people for himself among the French, and that in a short time a French Protestant Church would be built, and the people would hear the gospel preached in their own tongue."

I now began to feel that God had called me to the great work, and by visiting from house to house and by assisting the pastor in private meetings appointed for our people, which were conducted in the French language principally, God often blessed me and made me a blessing to others.

The meetings spoken of were fruitful of demonstration that I was not alone in being persecuted for reading the Bible and seeking to be godly; one interesting instance I will here relate:

During the revival meetings a Mrs. D. from Grosse

Isle, some fifteen miles below the city of Detroit, came into town and called at my house to relate a tale of sad distress to Mrs. P. to whom she had often applied for counsel and sympathy. She had heard nothing of our reformation and renunciation of Romanism, or it is doubtful if she had called, which rendered the circumstance a more remarkable providence. From her account, Mr. Mary, the colporteur from whom I obtained my Bible, had given her one, which she read attentively for seven months, and it happened once while at confession, discovering a misstatement in the professed scripture instructions of the priest, she ventured to correct him. Incensed at her impudence, he immediately inquired how she knew what the Bible taught; and learning she had one in her possession refused to pardon her till she should return home and destroy it in the fire. She went home, and weeping at the thought of the loss of the precious treasure, yet trembling in fear of the unpardonable sin of disobedience, she committed it to the flames, and returning to the priest, informed him she had destroyed it, and he in return gave her absolution. She informed us in public meeting while sobbing aloud, she made application for another Bible; that she had scarcely passed a night since the destruction of her book, but she had dreamed of its sacred contents.

But the object of her visit, as related to my family, had another development. At the time of the burning of the Bible she lived in ———, but now having removed to Grosse Isle, she called on a priest at Amherstburg, C. W., to seek the consolations of pardon by humble confession of sin. But now her burdened heart was pressed down under a double

weight of grief, for the priest refused her the blessing unless she should pay him one dollar in advance. The poor woman being without money, and laboring under a peculiar state of mental distress, resulting more from the loss of the Bible than any thing else, turned away from the confessional with a heavy heart; but finding no rest, she paced her way on foot, eighteen miles to Detroit, hoping to find a more merciful confessor. But this was only to double both her disappointment and distress, for the sapient Father, to whom she applied, knew how to demand his time-honored right, and he refused her the blessing for less than two dollars. Thus with a burdened and breaking heart, she was turned empty away from the throne of grace, and calling upon us to relate her tale of distress, we availed ourselves of the opportunity of directing her to Him who says, "Come buy wine and milk, without money and without price."

She was at first astonished at the change which had come over us, but was comforted by counsels, attended the church service with us, and related her troubles, was supplied with another Bible, which neither Priest nor Pope will ever deprive her of again. Mrs. D., her husband, and five daughters, have become constant readers of the Bible, and are striving by its counsels, to love and serve the Lord; and their son having entered into marriage with a Protestant lady, has turned away from Priests, Beads, and Penances, to be guided by the word of God alone.

CHAPTER VIII.

Organization of the first French Class. My call to labor for my countrymen. My effort in Detroit. A missionary procured. My employment as a Bible colporteur. Persecutions renewed. My last effort to induce Bishop L. to lead me back if I had erred from the right way. Quotation from the Canada Christian Guardian.

The reader will recollect that in a former chapter I alluded to the fact that the idea of organizing a French Protestant Church and of building an edifice for their worship where, in our own tongue, our people might hear the pure gospel preached as it is in Jesus Christ, had already been advertised by the pastor. So, as the work of grace moved on, the demand for the enterprise seemed to be a direct call of Providence. A correspondence was commenced with the Board of Missions in 1850, by Mr. Taylor, in which the presiding Elder, Rev. James Shaw, and the Pastor of the First Methodist Episcopal Church, Rev. E. H. Pilcher and others I have heard, participated; but for lack of a suitable person to take charge of such a mission, the project lingered till the summer of 1851. But the work of God among the French continued to progress, and as the number of those who preferred to perform their devotions in their own language increased, in the spring of 1851, the pastor organized the first Methodist Class of French Protestant Christians which ever met in De-

troit in that capacity, to worship God. At this contemplated commencement of our infant church, I communicated to my pastor, my own peculiar feelings and impressions with reference to my duty, to give myself to the work of laboring to save my countrymen by spreading the Bible and preaching the Gospel to them. This communication, though given with much delicacy and reluctance, was favorably received, by my pastor.

The organization of the French Class was made the time for my first public effort, which was brought about by notice being circulated through the city and the country around where the French resided, that François Pepin would publicly relate his experience and the circumstances which led to his conversion from Romanism to be a Methodist. A large number of French people were present, and God was evidently with us, and at the close of the service the class was formed and some more than twenty gave in their names as members on probation or seekers of religion.

Our distinct French meetings were regularly kept up from this time till the month of May when, under direction of the Missionary Society of the M. E. Church, Rev. Thomas Carter, from New York, arrived and took charge of the Society as a French Mission, and which has continued under his care until the present time.

As soon as Mr. C. entered upon the work of his mission, and the subject of building us a church became agitated, the priests began to renew their attacks upon me, for unto me they seem to attribute all the evil which had and was like to transpire as the result of this gracious work of God. The Agent of the

American Bible Society, Rev. J. A. Banghman, had about this time engaged my services as a colporteur, and as I was engaged in persuading the French people to read the Word of God, the indignation of the priests grew hotter and hotter, until they publicly denounced me, and warned the people to have nothing to do with me. As a natural consequence, the more bigoted of them renewed their attacks upon me in the streets, and charging me with selling my religion for money, and the like. At every opportunity afforded to converse with the more intelligent of them, I would remind them of the difference in the deportment of the priests and the Good Shepherd, who, having lost one sheep, "left the ninety and nine in the wilderness and searched after it until he found it." I would inquire, if the Bishop knows that I have strayed from the right way, why does he not come after me, or send for me, and seek to lead me back again? But though, (knowing their habits,) I had reason to believe that the priests were informed of my wish, they never once gave me a hearing, or by kind christian counsel, sought to recover me; but ever and anon new reports concerning me floated among the Romanists ranks, which I had reason to believe, originated with the priests. Again and again I heard of their warning the people to have no intercourse with me, but to avoid me as an evil man. These things were grievous to me, and although I had neither doubts or fears concerning my present religious experience, or the church to which I belonged, still I thought it a duty to place myself within the influence of their instructions, and favor them with an opportunity to convince me of what they call my error and sin.

I therefore addressed a letter to the Bishop proposing to hear him if he would give me an opportunity to reply, which he did not accept; but a gentleman from Toronto, C. W., answered me, proposing a controversy by private letter, or through the pages of the Canada Evangelist. But as I sought not controversy with strangers, and confessing myself incapable of doing so through the press in the English language, I of course declined, for my only object was to remove the last hinderance out of the way of my old religious teacher, that if he could, he might bring me back to the faith. As a variety of reports have been circulated with reference to my insolence in addressing the Bishop as I did, I beg leave to introduce it to the reader just as it was published in the above named paper, and with the remarks with which the Editor saw fit to accompany it.

CHALLENGE TO THE ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP OF DETROIT.

By a recent convert from Popery.

We have the satisfaction of laying before our readers the following letter written by a French Canadian who is pretty well known in this neighborhood, having resided for a considerable time in this township some years ago. Having been converted from the errors of Popery to the "truth as it is in Jesus," he is now engaged by a Missionary Society as a Bible Colporteur in Detroit and vicinity, and occasionally extends his tours for spreading the scriptures to this side of the river, visiting Windsor, Sandwich, and

this and adjoining townships. He is very zealous in the Bible cause and has been a successful instrument in doing much good in this department of Christian effort. The priests in Detroit and also in this vicinity, have used the greatest influence against him, but notwithstanding all, his labors have been blessed, and our prayer is that they may be more and more made a blessing. We are pleased to learn that a French Protestant Church is about to be built in the city of Detroit.

We may state that the proposal contained in the letter was not accepted by the Bishop.

TO BISHOP LEFEVER, BISHOP OF THE
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF THE
DIOCESE OF DETROIT.

RIGHT REVEREND SIR:—

Having been educated in the Church in which you minister, and for a long time laboured under its influence, I feel constrained to write this letter to you,—seeking light—if I am in darkness,—and desiring to know the truth if I am in error.

You know me. I have conversed with you on religion and about the Bible. Not being satisfied I with my family, left your church, and have since been greatly blessed in Christian fellowship, with another portion of God's people.

I learn, that one of your priests, has publicly forewarned his hearers to have nothing to do with me, and to hold no conversation with me. Many of my countrymen, who speak my native language, and who were once friendly, now avoid me,—as if I was a pestilence.

This, it seems to me, is not Christian, and not in accordance with God's law of love.

Now, I have this to propose. I will attend at what church you may direct, and hear what you have to say, wherein I am wrong; and all I want, is the privilege of replying,—if I think proper,—and shewing the “reasons of the faith that is in me.”

If I am right, you are wrong. If you are right, I am wrong, and I want to know it before it be too late. The Great Shepherd left the ninety-nine sheep that he considered safe, in order to recover the one that was lost. Will not you, an under Shepherd, imitate his example, and try and recover me. I am open to conviction. All I want is a fair hearing and the freedom of stating publicly, my objections to the Roman Church, for you to remove if you can.

I am an unlearned man, but, I love God and the truth.

Respectfully your Brother in Christ Jesus,
FRANÇOIS PEPIN.

MR. PEPIN'S CHALLENGE.

In our last number we published a challenge to the Roman Catholic Bishop of Detroit, to a public discussion, by F. Pepin, a convert from Popery, and

now a zealous Bible Colporteur in Detroit and its vicinity. About a fortnight ago we received a letter from a gentleman in Toronto, proposing to accept of the challenge, and desiring to enter into a controversy with Mr. Pepin, either by private letter or through the pages of this Magazine. In that letter the writer requests that there may be the avoidance of all personality, and yet he sets out with the unfair insinuation that "Mr. P.'s acceptance of the lucrative situation of Bible Colporteur so soon after his perversion makes the expression of his desire to know the truth suspicious."

In reference to this imputation of mercenary motives, we can assure our correspondent that he is greatly mistaken. Mr. Pepin receives now as Colporteur much less than he did when pursuing his former occupation.

With regard to our correspondent's challenge to Mr. P. to enter into a controversial warfare by letter or through the pages of the *Evangelist*, the two following considerations will fully suffice to show that it could not be conducted on an equal footing.

1st. Mr. Pepin is a Frenchman, and is only very imperfectly acquainted with the English language, which he speaks in a broken manner. Our correspondent on the other hand is one whose vernacular is the English tongue.

2d. Mr. Pepin is not accustomed to either English or French composition. His challenge to the Bishop was to a public discussion, and not to an epistolary correspondence or a controversy through some public print. It is readily conceived that a man may be pretty good in a discussion *orally*, but

who would not be able to sit down and compose an article for the press.

It is easy to see therefore, that the controversy solicited by the writer in question, could not be conducted with any fairness, owing to these important differences between them. If however our correspondent should come to Detroit, or agree to meet at some more central place for a discussion, so that it could be conducted in French, we have no doubt but Mr. Pepin would be ready to come forward in defence of that truth which has made him free.

We had an opportunity a few days ago of reading to Mr. P. the letter of our correspondent. Zeal for the truth fired his eye and gave a glow of animation to his countenance. He could not however from his imperfect knowledge of English, engage in an epistolary controversy. He stated however, that he would still adhere to his former challenge. On enquiring in what way he intended to conduct the discussion, he immediately took out of his pocket a little piece of cloth with a string to it. "This said he is the scapular which I got from the Bishop of Detroit. I went down on my knees and kissed the Bishop's ring and paid him a quarter of a dollar, and he put this piece of rag over my neck, professing to tell me that it was sent from heaven by the Virgin Mary, and that whoever wore such scapulars would be protected from all evil, and could never go to hell. Now says he, I was going to ask the Bishop in the first place, to prove from the Bible that this piece of rag given me by him could be the means of saving my soul or protecting from danger." Well, thought we, that will be rather a knotty point for the Bishop.

The Romanists may go to traditions and 'the fathers,' but the Bible and common sense are like David's sling and stone against Goliath's giant strength and armor.

Seeing that thus the Bishop abandoned me to my faith in God, as Protestant Christians receive it, I have endeavored diligently to labor to obtain salvation through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

CONCLUSION.

Dear reader, I have thus conducted you through my early life and education; have presented to you, in my humble manner, an account of many circumstances, exhibiting errors, delusions and evils which I once cherished as sacred and of divine origin. Of some of these things you have heard before, and some are entirely new, and you have no authority but my humble declaration as a proof of their existence; but you may depend that I have said but little, but what many others have seen the like, although they have not yet declared it. But let the reader remember, whether he be a Roman Catholic or a Protestant, that I speak with a clear conscience, that God will judge me concerning this narrative; and if I have wickedly spoken falsehoods, I have no hope of pardon from any priest or earthly confessor. The Methodists do not believe that any but God can pardon the sinner, and that dying without his pardon, as the Bible teaches, none can see the Kingdom of God.

Then believe me when I say I have spoken for no other object, but to glorify God for the light of his salvation, which I have found by reading the Bible;

and if it may please God, I might be an instrument in his hands, of leading my countrymen, who are blinded, deceived and abused, to follow the priests no longer; to read the Bible for themselves, and pray to God alone, that in the end, they may come to everlasting life.

I have brought out this book because it has long been impressed upon my heart as a duty which I owe to you and to the world, to proclaim the wonders of redeeming grace and the love of God which I feel in my soul.

Oh that God would arise for the deliverance of my countrymen from the oppressions of Popery, and bring them into the light and liberty of his dear children. "Yes, I do indeed, sometimes feel to say with St. Paul, I could wish myself afflicted by the permission of God, even to be accounted accursed, for my bretheren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh." Perhaps I shall yet die in this cause a martyr for the truth. My enemies who say I have forsaken the true church, have more than once sought to do me bodily injury, and threatened to kill me; but if I die, I will die praying with my Saviour, "Father forgive them, they know not what they do."

Dear reader, suffer a word of exhortation. Cast away your Beads, cast away your Scapular; bow down no more to images, but go into your chamber, "and pray to your Father who seeth in secret, and He will hear you pray, and reward you openly." Oh bear with me while I inquire, what would you say to Francois Pepin at the Bar of God, if the Judge should place you at the left hand, and say, "I am a jealous God," and will not give my honor to another;

you bowed down to images when I commanded you not to do so, depart you wicked into Hell? Ah! and if it should there be told you that I knew all the while you were in error, and did not warn you, would you not curse me to all eternity? Be warned then, I beseech you, be warned; take this timely, this prayerful advice, of one who loves your souls, and begin without delay. Begin to-day, to pray to God and to God alone.

Are you a Roman Catholic Priest? If so; as such, you will hate me, and this book also. But my friend, pause I beseech you, and make not a rash conclusion. I do not hate you, no: although I do not love your system of religious teaching, I do love your soul. Were you my avowed enemy as a Christian, I must love you; and why if you are a *Christian*, do not *you* love me? Jesus loved his murderers and prayed for them when dying. I have turned away from your faith, and you curse me. Are you not in error? Can you, according to the teachings of God's Holy Word, expect to go to Heaven when you die? Where do you expect to go? Ah, would you be numbered with the good and the happy in the Kingdom of Heaven? Then turn away from your idols, give up your superstitions, deceive the people no longer, and by and by, you and I will meet "where the wicked cease to trouble and the weary are for ever at rest."

Friend, do bear with me, while I inquire, do you not know that neither yourself, nor all your fellow-priests, no, nor the Pope himself, with all your energies combined, cannot keep me from the Kingdom of Heaven, if I confess my sins to God, and receive his pardon. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge

of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Why, then, will you terrify the people with the threats and fears of purgatory? Or are you, yourself, really deceived? Do you believe the strange dogmas of your Church? Then, with the valiant and immortal Luther, read the forbidden book, the Holy Bible, and like him, you shall be led from the darkness of your present ignorance, into the light of truth and salvation.

Christian reader, you have now seen some of the delusions of Romanism; be thankful that "the lines have fallen to you in pleasant places, and that you have a (more) goodly heritage." You have heard what God has done for my soul, for the souls of my family, for many of the French in Detroit, and what is still doing through his blessed word. Will you not join with us in a hymn of praise? Will you not remember us at the throne of grace, and devoutly and earnestly pray that God may come in mercy and in power, and deliver this people? Will you not pity the Romanist wherever you see one, praying that their "idols may soon be cast to the moles and to the bats," and that all the nations of the earth may soon know but the one good and true God, and that all the people may love and serve him.

Lastly, the writer would commend to you the words and sentiment of the following stanzas, as the prevailing prayer of his heart:

Arm of the Lord, awake, awake!
Put on thy strength—the nations shake!
And let the world, adoring see,
Triumphs of mercy wrought by Thee.

Say to the heathen, from Thy throne,
I am Jehovah—God alone;
Thy voice their idols shall confound,
And cast their altars to the ground.

No more let creature blood be spilt,
Vain sacrifice for human guilt!
But to each conscience be applied,
The blood that flowed from Jesus' side.

Almighty God, thy grace proclaim,
In every land, of every name;
Let adverse powers before Thee fall,
And crown the Saviour Lord of all.

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